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METAPHYSICS AND SOTERIOLOGY IN CLASSICAL SĀMĀKHĪYA AND YOGA

A Non-Realist Interpretation

Mikel Mason Burley

**A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the
requirements of the degree of Ph.D in the Faculty of Arts**

**Supervisor: Dr John Peacock
Department: Theology and Religious Studies
Month of submission: October 2004**

Word count (main text, excluding footnotes and appendices): 86,708

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the assistance of my supervisor, Dr John Peacock, whose questions and advice have been ever pertinent and instructive, and also Dr Rupert Gethin, who oversaw my upgrade from MLitt to Ph.D status and made some stimulating comments during the interview.

Staff at the University of Bristol's Humanities and Social Sciences Library have demonstrated remarkable perseverance in obtaining books and articles for me via inter-library loan.

Professor K. R. Norman at the University of Cambridge (now retired) kindly supplied me some years ago with a copy of his excellent Times_Norman font, which he developed for the use of scholars of South Asian languages. It has served me well since 1997, and I have used it in the present study for those characters which are accompanied by diacritical marks. While on this subject, I should also mention the two Devanāgarī fonts that I have used in Appendix A, namely xdvng and Shusha. I do not know who designed these, but whoever is responsible has performed a great service to South Asian scholarship and I am grateful to them.

I have received enormous support from my partner, Sue Richardson, who has provided not only love and encouragement but also helpful observations and valid criticism where due. It is difficult to imagine how I might have got this far without her.

It is, of course, I who must accept responsibility for the study as a whole, both for its defects and for its stronger points. I hope that those who read it will find something of value in the latter and will be generous enough to point out to me the former.

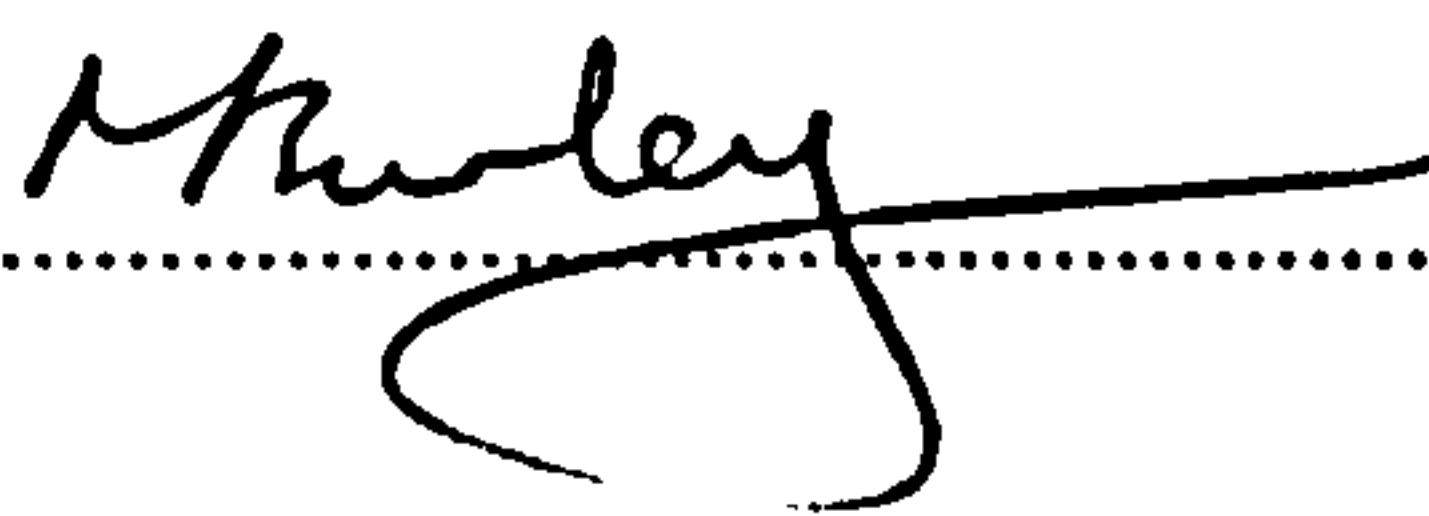
Abstract

The standard interpretation of classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga includes, and indeed often centres upon, the claim that these two Indian philosophical systems (*darśanas*) are realist and that their respective metaphysical schemata (which are extremely similar) constitute accounts of how an essentially “material” principle, namely *prakṛti*, “evolves” into the world or cosmos via a series of cosmogonic steps. I argue that this realist–cosmogonic interpretation stems from an unduly literal reading of certain passages in the classical texts, and suffers from serious shortcomings that prevent it from providing a coherent account of the *darśanas* in their entirety, especially with respect to the crucial relation between metaphysics and soteriological praxis.

As a helpful background to my critique of existing interpretations and presentation of a new alternative one, a broad historical overview of the two *darśanas* is given (Chapter 1), plus an examination of the relation between them (Chapter 2). This is followed by a survey of the applications of “realism”—and its opposing concepts of “antirealism” and “idealism”—in (western) philosophical discourse (Chapter 3), which lays a foundation for the discussion of the meaning and implications of the imputation of realism to Sāṃkhya and Yoga. I show, with reference to specific examples from the scholarly literature, that this imputation generally involves a confusion between different types of realism (Chapter 4), and then proceed to argue for a non-realist and non-cosmogonic interpretation, in which the metaphysical schema is understood to represent a transcendental analysis (in the Kantian sense) of the preconditions of experience (Chapters 5 and 6). Finally I explain how existing interpretations have led to serious misrepresentations of the soteriological enterprise of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and how this enterprise can be far more successfully portrayed—and shown to be integrated with the metaphysical theory—by means of my new interpretation (Chapter 7).

Author's Declaration

I declare that the research and writing of this dissertation were carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work as a whole is original, and any ideas or quotations from the work of other persons have been clearly credited to their sources. Views expressed herein are my own unless stated otherwise, and no part of the work has been submitted for any other academic award.

Signed:.....

Date:28/09/04.....

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Abbreviations

<i>Ahir.</i>	<i>Ahīrbudhmya-saṃhitā</i>
<i>Bhāṣya</i>	<i>Yogabhāṣya</i> (attributed to Vyāsa) [This abbreviation occurs occasionally in the main text. In parenthetical references and footnotes <i>YBh</i> is used instead]
<i>Bṛhad.Up</i>	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad</i>
<i>BSBh</i>	<i>Brahmasūtrabhāṣya</i> (of Śaṅkarācārya)
<i>Chānd.Up</i>	<i>Chāndogya-upaniṣad</i>
<i>CPuR</i>	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> [In referring to this work by Kant I have followed the standard practice of denoting its first and second editions by the letters “A” and “B” respectively]
<i>Critique</i>	[ditto]
<i>EIP</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies</i> (general editor, Karl Potter)
<i>EIP IV</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies</i> , vol. 4: <i>Sāṃkhya: A Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy</i> , ed. by Larson and Bhattacharya
<i>GBh</i>	<i>Gauḍapādashāstra</i> (of Gauḍapāda)
<i>Gītā</i>	<i>Bhagavadgītā</i>
<i>Kārikā</i>	<i>Sāṃkhyakārikā</i> (of Īśvarakṛṣṇa) [This abbreviation occurs occasionally in the main text. In parenthetical references and footnotes, <i>SK</i> is used instead]
<i>Kaṭh.Up</i>	<i>Kaṭha-upaniṣad</i>
<i>Maitr.Up</i>	<i>Maitrī- or Maitrāyaṇīya-upaniṣad</i>
<i>MBh</i>	<i>Mahābhārata</i>
<i>MW</i>	Monier-Williams’ <i>Sanskrit–English Dictionary</i> , 1963 reprint [first published, 1899]
<i>SK</i>	<i>Sāṃkhyakārikā</i> (of Īśvarakṛṣṇa) [see also <i>Kārikā</i>]
<i>SPBh</i>	<i>Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya</i> (of Vijñānabhikṣu)
<i>SS</i>	<i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> (attributed to Kapila)
<i>SSV</i>	<i>Sāṃkhyasūtravṛtti</i> (of Aniruddha)
<i>STV</i>	<i>Sāṃkhyataruvasanta</i> (of Muḍumba Narasiṃhasvāmin)
<i>Śvet.Up</i>	<i>Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣad</i>
<i>TK</i>	<i>Tattvakaumudī</i> (of Vācaspatiśra)
<i>TV</i>	<i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i> (of Vācaspatiśra)
<i>Webster’s</i>	<i>Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language</i> (unabridged), 16th edn, 3 vols (paginated consecutively)
<i>YBh</i>	<i>Yogabhāṣya</i> (attributed to Vyāsa) [see also <i>Bhāṣya</i>]
<i>YS</i>	<i>Yogasūtra</i> (attributed to Patañjali)
<i>YV</i>	<i>Yogavārttika</i> (of Vijñānabhikṣu)

Some Remarks on my Use of Italics and Underscoring

In the literature on Indian philosophy there is no universal standard of practice concerning the italicisation of Sanskrit terms. Some scholars invariably italicise them, while others do so very sparingly. Although I do not claim to be entirely consistent in my use of italics, I generally employ them in the following cases: (a) when a Sanskrit term is being used for the first time in the work as a whole, or when it is being introduced at a particular point where it is about to be further discussed; (b) when the term (or phrase, etc.) appears in parentheses to indicate what an English term is intended to stand for; (c) when it is the *word itself* that is being referred to, as distinct from the concept for which the word stands; (d) in footnotes, when the original version of a sentence or verse that has been quoted in the main text is given.

In several places, when quoting from the works of other scholars, I have made use of underscoring as a means of emphasising certain terms or statements. This is to avoid confusion when the original passage already contains italicised words or expressions. In those cases where the original passage contains no italics, I have myself used italics for the purpose of supplying emphasis. I have acknowledged all cases where emphasis has been added.

Introduction

THE PRESENT WORK is the result of a detailed enquiry into the classical systems (*darśanas*) of Indian philosophy known as Sāṃkhya and Yoga. My aim has been to develop an interpretation that takes seriously the claim of these systems to provide a method, or range of methods, for the transcendence of suffering and discontent. Many previous attempts have been made by scholars to present the philosophies of Sāṃkhya and Yoga in an intelligible fashion, and some of these have made extremely valuable contributions to a general understanding of the subject. I am not, however, convinced that any previous interpretation has adequately explained the relation between, on the one hand, the schema of metaphysical principles set forth systematically in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and alluded to in the *Yogasūtra*, and, on the other hand, the professed soteriological goal of establishing the “self” (*puruṣa*) or “seer” (*draṣṭṛ*) in its own immaculate being. I do not claim to have unravelled all the intricate mysteries of Sāṃkhya and Yoga; indeed, it would not be feasible to try to cover every aspect of these systems within a single study. I do, however, feel confident that the aspects which I have focused upon have been dealt with here in a way that represents a significant advance on much of the existing interpretive literature.

My investigation has brought to light some profound problems with the classical material as it is commonly interpreted; and thus my task has been, in large measure, to ask whether the common interpretations are justified, and, if they are not, what might constitute an alternative and superior interpretation.

What has come to be regarded as the standard interpretation of Sāṃkhya and Yoga has tended to be influenced by some major assumptions, the most important of which is that the two systems hold a *realist* view of the relation between conscious subjects and the external world. I will argue that this assumption is false, and that any interpretation based upon it is radically misguided. When the primary texts are examined closely, and considered in view of their overall soteriological orientation, it can be seen that the metaphysics of Sāṃkhya and Yoga deals only indirectly with the relation between experiencing subjects and the world of external objects. Its immediate concern is the more primary relation between two transcendental principles, the combination of which facilitates the emergence of a number of further principles, which are commonly referred to in the secondary literature as *tattvas* (“thatnesses”), but which I (for reasons that will be made clear later, especially in chapters 5 and 6) prefer to

call “constituents of experience in general”, or “necessary conditions of experience”, or simply “principles of manifestation”.

It is my view that we have to be very light-fingered when attempting to dress classical Indian systems in the garb of western terminology, and are well-advised not to go throwing high-impact terms such as “realism” and “idealism” around willy-nilly. This is not to say that such terms have to be avoided completely. They can, in certain instances, be extremely helpful—indeed, from a western philosophical standpoint, indispensable—in clarifying both particular aspects and general orientations of philosophical systems. In the case of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, however, I consider neither “realism” nor “idealism” to provide a suitable characterisation of their metaphysical stance. This stance has—as I will show—a great deal less in common with western forms of realism than it does with (some) such forms of idealism. But it would nevertheless be misleading to stress the idealist inclinations of the Indian systems, since, as has been suggested, the status of “external objects” is simply not the issue they are interested in. It is for this reason that I have entitled my study a *non-realist*—as opposed to an *idealist* or even an *antirealist*—interpretation.

WHAT THIS STUDY AIMS TO DO

It needs to be stressed at the outset, then, that what I aim to provide in this study is a fresh interpretation of classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga as presented in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and *Yogasūtra*. The study is therefore primarily hermeneutic in orientation. It addresses the question: What are the texts endeavouring to say—what is their *meaning*?

It goes without saying that I cannot, and nor can anyone else, know the intentions of the texts’ authors. We are unable to reach back in time and inject ourselves into their minds and thoughts. Indeed, we do not even know whether it is legitimate to speak of “authors” in this context, for the origins of the texts we are dealing with are opaque. Clearly the texts have been communicated, both orally and in written form, for many hundreds of years, and have undoubtedly undergone modifications along the way. We do not have an *Ur-text*, in the German sense, available to us, and it is not my aim to try to reveal such a text lying beneath either the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* or the *Yogasūtra*. We must, I think, accept that there is always a certain degree of arbitrariness—of historical and cultural contingency—attached to any interpretation of a text. We are all unavoidably embedded within a milieu that is informed by myriad historical and cultural factors, and so were the authors and redactors of the texts we are engaging with. Thus we should dispense with the notion of a pure encounter between an author and a reader: the relationship is unfathomably more complex and messy than that.

How, then, can I claim, on behalf of my interpretation, that it is an improvement upon previous ones? My principal appeal here is to philosophical coherence. I have intimated already that there are some serious philosophical difficulties with the most prominent existing interpretations of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. Now, it may have turned out to have been a mistake on my part to ask whether a more coherent, and hence philosophically plausible, interpretation were possible. I may have been on a wild goose chase. But that was the question I set myself; and I soon discovered that, once certain prejudices had been left aside (concerning, for example, the supposed realism and cosmological character of Sāṃkhya metaphysics), a greater degree of coherence did begin to emerge, and I started to see parallels with some elements of post-Kantian western thought.¹ When confronted with two opposing interpretations of a philosophical theory or system, one of which, after close scrutiny, makes considerable sense, and the other of which, after a comparable degree of attention, makes very little sense at all, it strikes me as being perfectly reasonable to take the sense-making interpretation more seriously than its rival. As the American philosopher W. V. O. Quine once remarked: “The more absurd the doctrine attributed to someone, *ceteris paribus*, the less the likelihood that we have well construed his words” (1969: 304).

This is the basis of my appeal to coherence: I submit that standard interpretations of Sāṃkhya and Yoga leave the philosophically-minded reader with a feeling of dissatisfaction and incomprehension. Not the sort of incomprehension one feels when reading the work of a great thinker whose ideas one is not yet ready to grasp fully; but, rather, the feeling that what one is reading is the product of a confused mind which has, in large part, failed to see its own confusedness. I do not wish to pretend that, on my interpretation, Sāṃkhya and Yoga emerge out of the shadows of confusion into a clear light of transparency. They would be peculiar philosophical systems indeed if everything they said fitted neatly into place in the manner of a jigsaw puzzle with no rough edges or missing pieces. I do not claim for my interpretation complete philosophical coherence; on the contrary, I think it contains some highly problematic elements, and I hope that I give due space to the discussion of these (they include, for example, the relation between “misperception” (*avidyā*) and “aloneness” (*kaivalya*), the apparent multiplicity of the self (*puruṣa*), and the concept of “pure consciousness”, all of which I discuss in Chapter 7). Rather, I put it forward as an interpretation that is enormously *more* coherent than its competitors, and which thus provides a context within which the outstanding difficulties can be more satisfactorily addressed, instead of being written off as merely additional unintelligible constituents of a fundamentally unintelligible whole.

¹ I shall say a little more about the ways that I draw upon western philosophical themes and ideas in the “Methodological remarks” below.

Philosophical coherence is not, however, the sole pinion of my claim to have developed an improved interpretation; there is a second wing, which could be termed faithfulness to the texts themselves. Now, I have already touched upon the fancifulness of hoping to discern an authorial intention within the texts. I am extremely reticent about claiming that there is something “true” or “correct” or “authentic” about my interpretation, since there seems to be no ultimate criterion that could serve to validate such a claim. And yet there is something about the process of engaging with a text—of immersing oneself in its language and phraseology, and of contemplating what it might possibly be alluding to—that leads one to gain a sense of having understood what it is that the text is pointing towards. As a conscientious reader of the text, this sense of understanding requires one to adopt an interpretation of the words that, at certain times, leans towards literality and, at others, towards metaphor and analogy. When I say, therefore, that I feel that my interpretation is “faithful”, I do not mean that, in every instance, I have opted for the most literal explanation of a phrase or passage, though in some instances this is so.² Rather, I have attempted to get to grips with the meaning and purpose of the texts—to view what they say in the context of their overarching soteriological project, and to ask, in relation to each statement made within the texts, how this bears upon the system as a whole. There is, ultimately, no objective measure of the kind of faithfulness that I am talking about. It is up to each careful reader of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga texts, and of my interpretation of them, to discern whether the interpretation I present resonates with his or her own understanding of the material. If it does not, I will be interested to hear why.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 gives, as a useful and necessary background to the study as a whole, an historical overview of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. Tracing the genealogies of ideas in Indian philosophy is a task fraught with difficulties, and I do not claim to have made any great contribution to the accounts that currently exist. One of the main hazards, of course, is the virtual impossibility in most cases of providing any definitive chronology of texts and authors; and due to this fact a sizable amount of any historical account concerning Indian philosophy is bound to be based on guesswork. With regard to certain contentious matters, such as the question of whether the

² Examples of places where my interpretation could be regarded as more literal than the standard one include my view that the five tanmātras—which are universally agreed to be sound, contact, form or visual image, flavour, and odour—are sense-contents and not “subtle” elementary particles or “material essences” that somehow transmute into physical atoms (see my discussion of the tanmātras and bhūtas in Chapter 6). An example of where I take the text *less* literally is to be found in my view that the manifestations of prakṛti do not represent a chain of ontological causation (as the relevant passages in the *SK* are usually taken to imply), but rather a chain of conditionality, with certain principles being necessary conditions, but not material bases, for the manifestation of others (again, this aspect of my thesis is dealt with most fully in Chapter 6).

Patañjali to whom the *Yogasūtra* is traditionally attributed is identical to the Patañjali who composed a famous commentary on Pāṇini's grammar, I have outlined and briefly evaluated the alternative opinions; but in many instances I have merely opted for what I take to be the most plausible version of events without going into any great detail regarding the evidence in favour and against. I hope the reader will agree that, for our present purposes, the chapter is long enough as it is, and any further information that is required can be looked for by following up the references provided.

Chapter 2 endeavours primarily to clarify the nature of the relation between Sāṃkhya and Yoga in their classical forms. An indirect benefit of this endeavour is, however, that some of the major themes within the two systems, which were perhaps only mentioned in passing in the first chapter, are brought more to the fore. After giving a broad outline of the principal scholarly viewpoints on the issue, and noting which of them I consider to be the strongest, I then devote a significant proportion of the chapter to a critique of one particular viewpoint, namely that of Georg Feuerstein. Despite the controversial and provocative nature of Feuerstein's position (according to which classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga are separated by a "chasm"), no attempt to directly counter this position has, to my knowledge, been made prior to my own. Having given due attention to the textual sources, and to the soteriological context that gave rise to them, I take the view—contrary to that of Feuerstein—that classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga, though not identical in all respects, are evidently manifestations or expressions of a common foundation of theory and practice. Far from rending the two systems apart, the different emphases that they exhibit provide us with complementary elements, which have a mutually illuminating effect, and which can therefore be fruitfully examined within the same study.

Chapter 3 moves away from the Indian systems themselves and takes a look at the crucial concept of "realism" as it occurs in western philosophy, along with its two most important antonyms, "antirealism" and "idealism". Upon looking into this area one is immediately confronted with a bewildering medley of philosophical positions and counterpositions, few of which appear to apply, or to have had applied to them, the terms we are concerned with in a wholly consistent manner. If the chapter can highlight the necessity of clearly defining what one means when speaking of realism and its rival concepts, then it will have served an important purpose. I hope that it can, however, also serve two further purposes. One of these is to furnish the necessary background for the claim that I make in Chapter 4, namely that the imputation of realism to Sāṃkhya and Yoga is thoroughly inappropriate. The other is to introduce some of the concepts associated with idealist philosophies, and especially the version of ideal-

ism proposed by Immanuel Kant, which will provide useful tools in Chapters 5 and 6 when I start to present my alternative interpretation.

Chapter 4 discusses the issue of what is meant when—as routinely occurs in the secondary literature—Sāṃkhya and Yoga are described as “realist”, and then concludes, as has been noted above, that such a description is pernicious. The source of the imputation of realism seems to involve three factors. One of these has to be a large measure of ignorance and wrong-headedness on the part of interpreters concerning the nuances of meaning that pervade the philosophical terms they attempt to wield. The second is a lack of careful attention to the sorts of entities and relations that the primary texts are actually concerned with. The third is an overeagerness on the part of traditional (i.e. pre-modern) commentators to follow their own anti-idealist agendas at the expense of diligent textual exegesis,³ and the willingness of certain modern interpreters to assume that these commentators got it right. When combined together these three factors generate what appears to be a persistent case for the realism of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. But via an analysis of the relevant claims, both traditional and modern, I show that, however persistent its *proponents* might be, the case itself is very crumbly indeed.

Chapter 5 continues the task of questioning the standard interpretation of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and focuses more sharply upon some of the key concepts surrounding the metaphysical principle of *prakṛti*. I argue that the relation of *manifestation* should be prioritised over that of *material causation* with regard to *prakṛti* and the principles that are said to “emerge” from it, and support this view with some suggestions concerning a re-interpretation of the so-called “doctrine of the pre-existent effect” (*satkāryavāda*). I further argue that the expression “material principle”—which, along with synonyms such as “primordial materiality”, is standardly applied to *prakṛti*—is in fact inapplicable to either *prakṛti*’s manifest or its unmanifest aspect, and that it is equally inapplicable to the three “strands” (*guṇas*) which constitute the nature of *prakṛti*. While acknowledging the considerable difficulties associated with any attempt to arrive at a fully coherent interpretation of the *guṇas*, I propose that “necessary conditions of manifestation” is about as close as we can get.

Chapter 6 builds upon the critique of the realist interpretation that has been developed in preceding chapters and offers a non-realist account of the principles of manifest *prakṛti*. According to this new account the principles are no longer taken to be more or less “subtle” and “gross” material entities in a cosmogonic or “evolutionary” chain of causal transformations. Instead they are viewed in synchronic terms as constituents of a transcendental analysis of the conditions of experience, which I sometimes refer to as a “transcendental phenomenological

³ The commentaries of Vyāsa and Vācaspatiśrī on the *Yogasūtra* are most pertinent in this respect.

analysis". Such terminology, derived largely from Kant and to a lesser extent from Edmund Husserl (in his "transcendental" phase), is not intended to imply a direct correspondence between the schema of Sāṃkhya and Yoga and that arrived at by the western philosophers concerned. Nor is it meant to suggest that the methodology of the Indian systems is equivalent to those of Kantian critical philosophy or Husserlian phenomenological reduction. I have chosen such terminology, rather, to emphasise the fact that, as in the cases of Kant and Husserl (and other philosophers who have been influenced by Kantian thought), Sāṃkhya and Yoga are engaged in an exploration of the necessary preconditions of experience, and that, although their methodological procedures are not made explicit in the classical texts, these must have involved some element of transcendental analysis. By "transcendental analysis" I mean, essentially, breaking down experience into its component parts in order to formulate an inventory of the constituents of experience in general. In the light of this re-interpretation I examine a number of important textual passages, and find that a far more coherent picture of the relations between the various principles of manifestation emerges. And, perhaps most important of all, it becomes possible to see how the metaphysical schema of Sāṃkhya and Yoga relates to the practice of sustained introspective meditation that forms the basis of these systems' soteriological enterprise.

Chapter 7 examines the notion that stands as the very goal and crowning glory of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga darśanas, namely *kaivalya*, the "aloneness" of the self or consciousness. Interpretations based upon the assumption of the darśanas' realism come up against intractable obstacles when they attempt to give an account of *kaivalya*. This is because the relevant textual descriptions invariably refer to the discontinuation of all manifest forms and mental activities, and yet maintain that the achieved result constitutes the highest possible kind of knowledge; this latter point indicating that *kaivalya* cannot be a mere shutting of one's spiritual eyes to an external world that continues to exist in one's absence. I show that, first, none of the various realist approaches to resolving the difficulty has been successful, and second, despite the persistence of certain anomalies, the overall non-realist approach that I am advancing best enables us to take seriously a central claim in the primary texts; this claim being that, in relation to the one whose experiences have dwindled to nothing, the manifest world disappears. Realist accounts cannot explain this disappearance, whereas on my interpretation it is explicable by virtue of the fact that experiences are what *constitute* the manifest world. To complete the chapter I propose that, notwithstanding some considerable problems associated with the concept of a pure and contentless consciousness, this concept nevertheless retains the closest correspondence with the notion of *kaivalya* of any that is available to us.

METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS

My approach to this enquiry combines four methodological strands, which are as follows.

(1) First and foremost is a close and careful analysis of the primary textual material, which comprises the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and the *Yogasūtra*, traditionally ascribed to Īśvarakṛṣṇa and Patañjali respectively. Although existing English translations of these texts have been useful, I have not relied solely upon these. It is only by studying the texts in their original language that one can come closest to an appreciation of their poetry as well as their many profound insights, and to this end I have scrutinised a number of Sanskrit editions of each of the primary texts. (Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from Sanskrit texts are my own.)

It should also be noted that, at the same time as enhancing one's appreciation of certain aspects of a work, a greater familiarity with it in its original language can dampen the exaggerated awe and respect with which a highly esteemed work of philosophy is often approached. Having heard, perhaps, that a text is the work of a single author, and expresses the condensed wisdom gleaned from that author's flashes of gnostic inspiration, it can come as a sobering surprise to discern signs of, for example, multiple authorship and a somewhat cut-and-paste style of composition. Such signs are especially prevalent in the *Yogasūtra*, although I should point out that I do not see it as part of the purpose of this study to enter into these compositional issues in any depth. For the most part, I treat both the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and the *Yogasūtra* as textual wholes rather than as more or less loose collections of disparate passages.

(2) The second strand of my approach is a consideration of secondary sources, under which category I include (a) traditional Sanskrit commentaries, (b) pre- and post-classical versions of the systems concerned, and (c) more recent interpretive works by scholars from India and elsewhere. I have not attempted to be fully comprehensive in my treatment of any of these categories, but have, rather, used the texts selectively—though, in my view, fairly and representatively—in order to illustrate particular points that I wish to make with regard to the primary sources.

In contrast to the convention among some scholars, I do not include any of the traditional commentaries under the term “classical”, but save this designation for the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and *Yogasūtra* alone. It strikes me that, since the expressions “classical Sāṃkhya” and “classical Yoga” are generally used to denote particular bodies of doctrine and not merely historical periods in the development of these bodies of doctrine, a great deal of confusion can be avoided by restricting the application of such expressions in the way that I have done. As soon as we allow “classical” to encompass any or all of the known commentaries, it then becomes impossible to speak of “the viewpoint of classical Sāṃkhya (or Yoga),” since one would have to

acknowledge the various and sometimes conflicting viewpoints of the different commentaries, certain of which have traditionally been accredited with more authority than others. There is, of course, no pure “classical viewpoint” that can shine forth independently of our own interpretive filters, and the necessity of interpretation also applies to the commentaries themselves. If, therefore, one were to perform a rigorous evaluation of the commentarial arguments on every point one could easily end up going round in circles without ever reaching the nub of the matter. I have endeavoured, therefore, to follow a balanced approach, which neither ignores the commentaries nor gets overly embroiled in their internal and polemical wranglings.

The commentaries that I have consulted are all included in the Bibliography (under “Primary Sources”, since they are invariably published alongside the primary texts). Of these, the ones that I have found most useful, and to which I refer most often herein, are (on the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*) Gauḍapāda’s *bhāṣya* and Vācaspatimiśra’s *Tattvakaumudī*, and (on the *Yogasūtra*) Vyāsa’s *Yogabhāṣya* and Vācaspatimiśra’s *Tattvavaiśārādī* (which is, strictly speaking, a subcommentary on the *Yogabhāṣya*).

Other than in the historical overview in Chapter 1 I make relatively few references to pre- and post-classical formulations of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. (There is quite enough to be getting on with in the classical texts!) At certain places I find it useful to mention specific passages from the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* (which is generally agreed to be later than the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*) and its commentaries (e.g. in the section on the *guṇas* in Chapter 5); but on the whole I limit the discussion to the classical material.

As a background to the enquiry I have familiarised myself with the scholarly literature on Sāṃkhya and Yoga that has been written in or translated into English, from Henry Colebrooke and Horace Wilson (1837) onwards, and selective references to this literature will be found throughout the present work. The existing interpretations that have been of particular value during the course of my research—though I have to admit that only in a very few cases is this due to my agreeing with them—are those presented by Surendranath Dasgupta (1922, 1924), John Davies (1894), Mircea Eliade (1969), Georg Feuerstein (1979a, 1980), Jajneswar Ghosh (1977), Gerald Larson (1979, 1987), Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1927 ii), and Ian Whicher (1998). I regard none of these interpretive efforts as completely satisfactory, and thus many of my references to them contain a critical element.

Of the scholars just mentioned, Ghosh is the one whose understanding of Sāṃkhya and Yoga comes closest to my own, but even in his case much of his published work on the subject remains within the strictures dictated by the realist assumption. It is principally in the introduction that he wrote for a book by his guru, Swāmī Hariharānanda Āraṇya (first published

in 1936, then reissued by Motilal Banarsidass in 1977), that Ghosh begins to develop a more convincing articulation of the Sāṃkhya philosophy. At one place he calls this articulation “objective idealism,” and speaks of Sāṃkhya’s world being “the world of experience, as it knows nothing of any world or system of objects and events existing in independence of consciousness” (1977: 3). Due, at least in part, to the necessary brevity of an introductory essay, however, Ghosh does not adequately flesh out the pertinent insights that he makes, and seems to have nowhere provided a fuller exposition of this viewpoint. Furthermore, the essay has been passed over in silence by most subsequent scholars, who appear to have gravitated back to a thoroughly realist interpretation.

A further exception to the general trend is Braj M. Sinha, who has made a comparative study of Sāṃkhya–Yoga and Abhidharma Buddhism with regard to their respective views of time. He, like myself, is highly critical of the interpretation of prakṛti’s *sarga* (“surge”, “creation”, “manifestation”) that takes it to be a process of cosmological evolution; and he, again like myself, refers to Sāṃkhya and Yoga metaphysics as “primarily an attempt at a transcendental analysis of the facts of human experience” (1983: 17). Despite this highly promising statement, however, Sinha continues to refer to Sāṃkhya–Yoga as a “realistic philosophy” (p. 46), without specifying what he means by this, and—due to the constraints of his study’s parameters—he does not even begin to provide a full exposition of the “transcendental analysis” he has mentioned. The present study is in part an attempt to rectify this deficiency.

(3) The third strand of my approach relates to my background in western philosophy. While taking care not to try to force uniquely Indian doctrines and models into the conceptual moulds of a foreign tradition, I have at several places found certain terms and concepts derived from western thought to be particularly helpful for drawing out the meanings of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga material. Since I am writing in English for an English-speaking readership, and since I cannot extract myself from my European cultural heritage, there is a degree of inevitability attached to my using western philosophical tools; but this inevitability does not extend to the particular way in which I interpret the Indian systems. This is shown by the fact that among the targets of my criticisms of many existing interpretations is what I regard as their misapplication of western concepts to Sāṃkhya and Yoga, including especially such concepts as realism and materiality.

It is in Chapter 3 that western philosophical concerns come most noticeably to the fore, but it has been my intention to weave such concerns into the study wherever they can serve usefully to illuminate our understanding of the Indian material. The voice of Kant interjects at several places, as does that of Schopenhauer (albeit mainly in footnotes). This is hardly sur-

prising, since the study as a whole draws significantly upon Kantian ideas, and Schopenhauer represents a confluence of Kant's philosophy and Indian soteriological thought.⁴ Phenomenology is mentioned at certain places, notably in Chapters 6, 7, and 8. Had space permitted, a more thorough discussion of Husserlian phenomenology—especially in its later “transcendental idealist” phase—might have provided a beneficial addition to the study. I hope, however, that the remarks that I do make on this theme, though relatively few, are sufficient to indicate where I consider the points of similarity and difference with Sāṃkhya and Yoga to lie.

(4) The fourth of my methodological strands could be referred to as “intrapsychic field-work”. By this I mean practical training in the methods of yoga, including a comprehensive range of postural, breathing and meditative techniques, which are geared towards the introspective realisation of the kinds of mental states described in Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophy. Although teachers of yoga may disagree over the precise methods that are best suited to achieve the desired result, there is little disagreement about the fact that, for most students, significant results are not easily obtained. “Practice (*abhyāsa*) is the effort [required to gain] stability,” says the *Yogasūtra* (1.13). “It becomes firmly embedded [or consolidated (*bhūmi*)] when cultivated diligently for an extended period without interruption” (1.14). I would not, therefore, claim to be anything more than a novice with regard to soteriological accomplishment in the discipline of yoga. I have, however, made two trips to India and Nepal amounting to a total of fourteen months, during which time I was able to undergo training with a number of eminent yoga teachers (as well as some less eminent ones!).⁵ This was sufficient to give me some grasp of what yoga *sādhana*⁶ comprises, and of the psychological and physiological effects it can engender.

An intimate acquaintance with the practical procedures of yoga is, in my view, an invaluable part of developing an understanding of the systems of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. These systems are, after all, primarily soteriological and only secondarily philosophical or metaphysical. It would therefore be untenable to imagine that one could comprehend the philosophy in the ab-

⁴ “[I]n Kant and Schopenhauer the mainstream of Western philosophy threw up conclusions about the nature of reality which are strikingly similar to some of those propounded by the more mystically oriented religions or philosophies of the East, yet arrived at by an entirely different path” (Magee 1983: 316).

⁵ My two trips were made, respectively, between July 1993 and February 1994, and September 1999 and April 2000. The more “eminent” of the teachers I trained with (though not necessarily well-known in the West) include the following: Ram Krishna Das at Paśupatināth maṇḍīr, near Kathmandu (he is also known as Dhudhādhāri Bābā, “milk-drinking holyman”, due to the vow that he took over twenty years ago to consume a diet consisting entirely of cows’ milk); Diwakar Sharma (Rishikesh); Kailāsnāth (Rishikesh); Jehangir Palkhivala (Mumbai); E. R. Gopalakrishnan (Adyar, Chennai); Yogacharya V. Venkatesha (Mysore); and Neeraj Goel at the Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute in Lonavla (near Pune).

⁶ *Sādhana* (from *√sādh*, “to aim towards a goal”): “that which leads to the goal,” i.e. a “path” or regime of practice.

sence of any familiarity with the soteriological practice.⁷ I should make it clear that I am not claiming to possess any superior access to the underlying truths of Sāṃkhya and Yoga by means of contemplative insight. I do, however, regard my experience of the discipline of yoga as having enhanced my appreciation of the ways in which the theory and practice of the two systems cohere and interrelate.

There is a fifth element in my interpretive approach, but, rather than being a distinct strand in itself, it is really the wax that adheres to and maintains the integrity of the four strands already mentioned. This fifth element is imagination. I have, to some extent, followed the advice that K. C. Bhattacharyya offers in the preface to his “Studies in Sāṃkhya Philosophy”, which is that the interpretation of Sāṃkhya (and, presumably, of Yoga as well) “demands imaginative–introspective effort at every stage on the part of the interpreter” (1956 1: 127). This demand does not give the interpreter a license to attribute all manner of fantastic doctrines to the classical darśanas; rather, it recognises the necessary contribution that imaginative speculation must make to an interpretive project if that project is not to be constrained by, but is to venture beyond, the limits of existing interpretations.

⁷ Frits Staal has convincingly argued this point in relation to mystical traditions more broadly (1975: 123 ff.). He says, for example, that, “If mysticism is to be studied seriously, it should not merely be studied indirectly and from without, but also directly and from within” (p. 123).

An Historical Overview of Sāṃkhya and Yoga

TIME (*KĀLA*) is regarded in Indian mythology as the great producer and the great destroyer. It consumes everything that it has previously manifested.¹ In the case of the histories of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, time has certainly eaten up the source materials that would be required to arrive at anything remotely resembling a clear picture of the development of these philosophical systems. Yet, despite the paucity of information, there is no option of ignoring the historical dimension entirely, for an appreciation of the meaning of any system of Indian philosophy entails and demands at least some attempt to comprehend its broader context. *Some attempt* is all that can be expected, for the evidence that is available to us amounts to little more than a patchwork quilt, with many more holes than patches.

Several studies exist on the histories of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, some of which constitute portions of works that set out to cover Indian philosophy in its entirety,² and others of which are more singularly focussed upon either Sāṃkhya or Yoga, or both of these together.³ I am including here merely a single chapter, in which I shall endeavour to outline the historical information that is available to us. This will, of necessity, be a selective summary, but references to more detailed and comprehensive studies will be included both in footnotes and in the main text. In this chapter I shall stay fairly close to what has become a somewhat standardised method of approaching the history of Indian philosophies, which is to focus almost exclusively upon textual sources, beginning with the major Upaniṣads and moving steadily forward in an approximate chronological sequence. Reflecting the fact that we are interested primarily in how the so-called classical formulations of Sāṃkhya and Yoga fit into a broader context, the chapter's three main sections deal with (a) early (i.e. "preclassical") sources, (b) the classical texts themselves, along with their respective commentaries, and (c) developments that have occurred subsequent to the classical period. In certain places, especially in the second section, the chapter will read like little more than a list of texts accompanied by brief speculations concerning their respective authors and dates. However philosophically uninteresting

¹ "There is nothing here in this universe which all-voracious time does not devour, like the submarine fire [swallows] the overflowing ocean" (*Yogavāsiṣṭha* 1.23.4, trans. Feuerstein 1974: 49). "Kāla pours forth beings; Kāla destroys creatures; everything is subject to Kāla, but Kāla is subject to no one" (*Kūrmapurāṇa* 1.11, trans. Dimmitt and van Buitenen 1978: 230). "Time is surely the conqueror whom no one escapes" (*Mahābhārata* 6.15.56, trans. van Buitenen 1981: 43).

² These include: Dasgupta 1922, ch. 7; Frauwallner 1973 I, ch. 6; and Radhakrishnan 1927 II, chs 4 and 5.

³ e.g. Keith 1949; Johnston 1937; Chakravarti 1975.

such lists might appear, they are nevertheless necessary for positioning the classical material within a longer trajectory. They will also provide useful reference points for occasions when particular texts and authors are mentioned in later chapters.

The historical theme, incidentally, spills over into Chapter 2, for there I include some remarks on how views of the relation between the Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems are affected by theories of their historical development. I shall also there express an opinion on what I consider to be the most plausible scenario for the emergence of classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga.

EARLY SOURCES

Sāṃkhya is commonly held to be the oldest of the major systems of Indian philosophy.⁴ It is not always clear, however, what is meant when this claim is made. It is generally admitted that what has come to be known as the classical formulation of Sāṃkhya, presented in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, is by no means the earliest or original version of the system; it was preceded by, and probably existed contemporaneously with, innumerable other versions, all of which bore some family resemblance to one another without, apparently, adhering to a precisely stipulated set of doctrines. When the claim of unrivalled antiquity is made, therefore, it is rarely meant that Īśvarakṛṣṇa's Sāṃkhya is the oldest system of Indian philosophy.⁵ It is, rather, something far vaguer than that. What is usually meant, I suspect, is that the loose genealogical network of "Sāṃkhya" teachings (including the pre-systematic ragbag of "proto-Sāṃkhya" ideas) can be traced further back into the ancient textual sources—and more particularly into the major Upaniṣads—than can any of the other systems of Indian philosophy. The claim is, therefore, highly dubious, for there is no clear evidence that a cohesive Sāṃkhya *system* existed earlier than other systems. Indeed, there is no definitive evidence to show that such a system pre-existed the foundation of Buddhism sometime during the fourth or fifth century BCE, or Jainism around the same time. And Vedāntins, irrespective of the particular sub-school they belong to, would argue that the Upaniṣads themselves present a coherent body of teachings, which contains Sāṃkhya elements in places but which subsumes and eclipses Sāṃkhya as a philosophical system. That Sāṃkhya is the oldest system of Indian philosophy cannot, then, be taken as self-evident; it is, rather, a hypothesis, albeit one that tends to be

⁴ "Of the different systems of philosophical thought that evolved in ancient India, the Sāṃkhya is perhaps the most important and the oldest one" (Mainkar 1972: 1). "The Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy is perhaps the oldest philosophical thought and discipline that has come down to us as a sacred heritage. There may be differences of opinion among scholars regarding the source of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy but its antiquity is never disputed" (Sen Gupta 1982: ix).

⁵ An exception is John Davies, who considers the *SK* itself to be "the first recorded system of philosophy" (1894: 101).

treated as a proven fact by those who are particularly sympathetic to the claims of Sāṃkhya's advocates.

In any case, whether some version of Sāṃkhya is or is not the oldest system of Indian philosophy, the task of tracing its origins—along with those of its sibling darśana, Yoga—has been fruitfully undertaken by a number of researchers. The considerable difficulties involved in connecting ideas expressed in different contexts, possibly separated by hundreds of years, along with the ubiquitous uncertainties of ancient Indian chronology, have not prevented a fairly broad agreement from emerging on the issue of the formation of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. The story of their formation is sometimes presented using a metaphor of gestation or ontogeny, according to which the two systems—or, at least, some rudimentary notions that were later to be associated with those systems—were conceived alongside a range of competing ideas and speculations sometime around the period of the earliest Upaniṣads. If a date is to be put on this period, then it is usually held to be circa 900–600 BCE, although such dates should be understood to be very approximate indeed.⁶ Over the course of the early prose Upaniṣads—such as the *Chāndogya*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Aitareya*, and *Kauṣītaki*—the gestation model has it that a number of proto-Sāṃkhya and proto-Yoga (or “proto-Sāṃkhya–Yoga”) ideas continued their development until, in the metrical Upaniṣads, most notably the *Kaṭha* and *Śvetāśvatara* (both circa 500–200 BCE), they “emerged from the womb” as relatively discernable viewpoints.⁷

Typical examples of “proto-Sāṃkhya” ideas in the earliest Upaniṣads include the following. *Chānd.Up* 6.4 speaks of fire, sun, moon, and lightning as all comprising three “forms” (*rūpas*)—namely, “light” or “heat” (*tejas*), which is identified with the colour red; “water” (*ap*), identified with white; and “earth” or “food” (*anna*), identified with black or the “dark” (*kṛṣṇa*). These three qualities and their corresponding colours, which are also mentioned in *Śvet.Up* 4.5, are clearly evocative of the three “strands” (*guṇas*) that are so fundamental to the Sāṃkhya philosophy (see Chapter 5 below). It is also in the *Chānd.Up* (7.25.1) that we find the earliest use of the term *ahaṃkāra*. The verse is of considerable interest, suggesting, as it does, a conformity or equivalence between the world and the personal ego: “so now the doctrine of the *ahaṃkāra*: ‘I am in the nadir, in the zenith, in the West, in the East, in the South, in the North, I am all that is here’” (trans. van Buitenen 1957a: 19). Van Buitenen has plausi-

⁶The dating of the Upaniṣads has become bound up with the whole “Āryan invasion” imbroglio, and is thus an area of intense academic and political controversy (which I will do my best to avoid here!). Those who deny that the Vedas were composed by a people who had entered India from the north sometime around 1500 BCE tend to suggest that the first Upaniṣads are earlier than 900 BCE. See e.g. Feuerstein et al. (1995: 96): “The *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads*, by [our] reckoning, should belong to the second millennium B.C.”

⁷Chakravarti uses precisely this metaphor (1975: 34).

bly postulated a continuity between the act of creation, as depicted in the *Chānd.Up* (ch. 6) and the *Bṛhad.Up* (esp. 1.2.1 and 1.4.1–3), and the concept of ahaṃkāra as it occurs in classical Sāṃkhya: in both cases there is an affirmation—or “formulation”, as van Buitenen puts it—of oneself as “I” (*aham*), which affirmation is also the moment of the world’s coming into manifestation (1957a esp. pp. 19–21).

Among the many precursors of later Sāṃkhya and Yoga in the *Kaṭh.Up* is its well-known account of the stages through which one passes on the way to the “highest goal”:

Beyond the sense-capacities (*indriyas*) are their objects (*arthas*), and beyond these objects is the [synthesising] mind (*manas*); beyond the [synthesising] mind is discernment (*buddhi*), and beyond discernment is the great self (*ātmāmahān*). Beyond the great self is the unmanifest (*avyakta*); beyond the unmanifest is self (*puruṣa*). Beyond self there is nothing. That is the destination; that is the highest goal (*parāgati*). (I.3.10–11)⁸

While the schema of principles presented in these verses, and also a slightly variant schema that appears later in the same Upaniṣad (*Kaṭh.Up* II.3.7–8),⁹ are clearly not identical with that of classical Sāṃkhya, their similarities can hardly be ignored. The passages portray a progressive transformation of self-identity, leading ultimately to the disclosure of *puruṣa*, which is of course the explicit goal of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. That the method used to arrive at such a self-revelation is one of sustained introspective meditation is indicated at other points in the text. *Kaṭh.Up* I.3.13, for example, speaks of restraining speech (*vāc*) and mind (*manas*), etc., “in the tranquil self (*śānta-ātman*)”, while at II.3.10–11 the “highest state” (*paramāṃ gati*) is said to be instantiated upon the cessation of sensory and intellectual activity, and the “steady holding (*dhāraṇā*) of sensations” is explicitly referred to as *yoga*.¹⁰

The *Śvet.Up* (6.13) is where we find the first known mention of *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* together. These are said to be mutually important aspects for “knowing the divine (*deva*)” and thereby gaining “release from all fetters” (cf. 1.8), although it is not explicitly stated what the two aspects consist in. It is possible that the use of the terms here is similar to that in the third chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā*, where *sāṃkhya* is associated with revelatory knowledge (*jñāna*) and renunciation, and *yoga* is associated with action (*karman*). The optimum method, as presented in the *Gītā*, is to combine the two aspects by engaging in actions while maintaining an attitude of renunciation and non-attachment to the fruits of those actions (3.3–8). Whatever

⁸ My translation of the Sanskrit text as given in Radhakrishnan 1978: 625. The Sanskrit text itself reads: *indriyebhyaḥ parā hy arthā arthebhyaś ca param manaḥ / manasaś ca parā buddhir buddher ātmā mahān paraḥ // mahataḥ param avyaktam avyaktāt puruṣaḥ paraḥ / puruṣān na paraṃ kiñcit sā kāṣṭhā sā parā gatiḥ //*

⁹ “Beyond sense-capacities is the [synthesising] mind,” etc.

¹⁰ Compare the following statements from the *YS*: “Yoga is the cessation of mental activities” (*YS* 1.2); “Concentration (*dhāraṇā*) is the binding of the mind (*citta*) to a [single] place” (*YS* 2.1).

might be the intended meaning of *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* in the *Śvet.Up*, the Upaniṣad's emphasis is firmly upon the acquisition of revelatory knowledge, that being knowledge of the "lord" (*īśa*, *hara*) or "deity" (*deva*). In certain places this lord is described in a similar manner to the *puruṣa* of classical Sāṃkhya, as, for example, "witnessing (*sākṣin*), consciousness (*cetas*), solitary (*kevala*), and without strands (*nirguṇa*, i.e. devoid of any features characteristic of phenomenal reality)" (*Śvet.Up* 6.11). Elsewhere, however, the impression is given of the lord's performing a more active, controlling role in the world: phenomenal reality (*prakṛti*) is his "magic power" or "conjured image" (*māyā*) (4.10); it is due to his greatness that the "wheel of *brahman*" turns (6.1); and it is he who, "like a spider, covers himself with threads from *pradhāna*" (6.10). Throughout the *Śvet.Up*, the lord is treated far more as a focus for reverence and devotion than is *puruṣa* in classical Sāṃkhya, and in this respect it is ostensibly far closer to the *īśvara* of classical Yoga.¹¹

Other points in the *Śvet.Up* that are worth drawing attention to here include the following. The name "Kapila" appears at 5.2, and can be identified with the *hiranya-garbha* (the "golden seed") of 4.12 due to a similarity of symbolism and phraseology between the two verses. In both verses, the supreme ruling deity is said to behold a first-born, in the one case named as *Hiranyagarbha* and in the other as *Kapila*. Although nothing further is said about this person or entity in the Upaniṣad, both names are significant in the traditions of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, *Kapila* being the legendary originator of the Sāṃkhya teachings and *Hiranyagarbha* being the initial preceptor of Yoga (according, at least, to certain sources, such as the *Ahīrbudhnyasamhitā*—see below). Several verses later (*Śvet.Up* 5.7) we encounter the first known use of the conjunct expression *triguṇa* ("three strands"), which occurs here as part of a description of the individuated person, who is tied to the world of experience and action. The three *guṇas* are not separately characterised, but there is no reason to think that it is anything other than the well-known Sāṃkhya doctrine that is making an appearance here.

Concise enumerations of principles, that seem to prefigure the Sāṃkhya schematic, are also present in the *Śvet.Up*. At one place (1.4) an analogy of the parts of a wheel is used, in which the wheel is said to have a single circumference, three tyres, sixteen ends, fifty spokes, twenty counter-spokes, and so on. Although it is not self-evident what each of these parts is intended to represent, several interpreters have offered compatible explanations that relate each of them to a particular Sāṃkhya principle.¹² The following verse (*Śvet.Up* 1.5) employs the analogy of flowing water to outline other principles, this time in groups of five: the water has five streams

¹¹ "The lord (*īśvara*) is a special self (*puruṣa-viśeṣa*)" (*YS* 1.24); "By applying oneself to the lord (*īśvara-praṇidhāna*), oneness (*samādhi*) is attained" (*YS* 2.45).

¹² See e.g. Chakravarti 1975: 19–22; Radhakrishnan 1978: 711–12; Johnston 1930: 855 ff.

from five sources; its waves are the five “breaths” (*prāṇas*), the “root” of which is the “fivefold determination” (*pañca-buddhyādi*); there are five currents and a formidable flood of five “distresses” (*duḥkhas*), which can be further divided into fifty. Again, considerable scope for interpretation is left here, but there are clear resonances with, for example, the fifty divisions of the “phenomenal emergence” (*pratyaya-sarga*) referred to at *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 46.

Sāṃkhya and Yoga may, then, have “emerged from the womb” in the *Kaṭh.*- and *Śvet. Up.*, but they had not yet, according to the ontogenic model we are working with, matured into distinctive and internally coherent systems of philosophy. They were still interfused with other pre-philosophical, or theological, elements, which tend to be somewhat loosely referred to by interpreters as “Vedāntic”. In the present context this latter term refers not to the Upaniṣads themselves but to certain later attempts to systematise the teachings thereof, and especially to the attempt made by Śaṅkarācārya, which has become known as the most prominent version of “nondualist” (*advaita*) Vedānta. In any event, the admixture of viewpoints that were later to be distinguished as belonging to Sāṃkhya and Yoga on the one hand, and monistically-oriented versions of Vedānta on the other, continues to occur in later prose Upaniṣads, such as the *Praśna* and *Maitrāyaṇīya* (ca. 400–200 BCE),¹³ as well as in other texts from similar or slightly later periods.

The *Praś. Up* (4.8) includes a comprehensive list of principles, which tallies very closely with that of the manifestations of prakṛti in classical Sāṃkhya. It differs on a few points, such as its changing the order of buddhi and ahaṃkāra, and adding three extra principles, namely *citta* (mind, or an aspect thereof), *tejas* (fire, light, or heat), and *prāṇa* (vital breath), but in other respects it matches well.

Of all the major Upaniṣads, the *Maitrāyaṇīya* (a.k.a. *Maitrī*) displays the greatest affinity with the ideas of classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga. The text relies heavily upon quotations from earlier Upaniṣads and from other sources, and lacks a consistent approach of its own; but where it deals with metaphysical and methodological matters the similarity with classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga is often very striking. The self (*puruṣa*) is identified with consciousness (*cetas*),¹⁴ and is described as the “enjoyer of food [supplied by] prakṛti” (*Maitr. Up* 6.10).¹⁵ Prakṛti is said to comprise the “three strands” (*triguṇa*) and to exist in both a manifest and an unmanifest state (*ibid.*). The instructions on yoga practice, and the descriptions of intrapsychic experience engendered thereby, are at least as explicit in the *Maitr. Up* as anywhere else in

¹³ Though decidedly *not* in the *Māṇḍūkya-upaniṣad*, which is usually similarly dated.

¹⁴ Cf. *SK* 55: “[...] *cetanah puruṣah* [...]”.

¹⁵ Cf. *SK* 37: “[...] buddhi brings about the enjoyment of *puruṣa* [...]”; *YS* 2.18: “The seen (*dṛśya*), being of the character of illumination, activity and stability [...] is for the sake of enjoyment and liberation.”

Indian literature. In certain respects they foreshadow elements of the classical system; for example, the *Maitr. Up*'s "six-limbed" (*ṣaḍaṅga*) system of practice resembles the last five limbs of the classical "eight-limbed" (*aṣṭāṅga*) system (*YS* 2.29 ff). In other ways, they are closer to the instructions in haṭha-yoga treatises of the Tantric era, especially in passages such as 6.21–22, where the technique of concentrating vital energy (*prāṇa*) in the "gracious channel" (*suṣumnā-nāḍī*) is described along with the various sounds that are heard internally as energy ascends through that channel.¹⁶

Textual sources other than the Upaniṣads that anticipate themes and concepts of classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga include certain portions of India's immense wealth of legendary and epic literature, most notably the *Mokṣadharmā* and *Bhagavadgītā* sections of the *Mahābhārata*, but also passages in several Purāṇas.¹⁷ These works, which are often encyclopaedic in scope, tend to be philosophically promiscuous in the sense that, as A. B. Keith notes with regard to the *Mahābhārata*, they frequently present various and incompatible viewpoints "in immediate proximity to one another without any apparent sense of their incongruity" (1949: 36). The relevant passages in these works are too numerous to receive a comprehensive treatment here, and I must therefore refer the interested reader to more detailed studies that already exist on the subject.¹⁸ I shall restrict my comments here to a couple of fairly general observations.

The first concerns something that has already been mentioned in relation to the pre-classical material as a whole, which is that there tends not to be a clear and consistent distinction in the epic and Paurāṇic literature between the "Sāṃkhyan" and "Vedāntic" doctrines. There is, in particular, a considerable degree of ambiguity attached to the important term *brahman*; which ambiguity is, again, not unique to this branch of Indian literature, but is particularly noticeable therein. *Brahman* is conspicuous by its absence in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and *Yogasūtra*, although it occurs in several commentaries (sometimes—surprisingly and implausibly—among the synonyms of *prakṛti*,¹⁹ and sometimes in other contexts²⁰). In the preclassical versions of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, however, *brahman* features prominently as a supreme metaphysical principle.²¹ This might spur us to question whether they can be counted as ver-

¹⁶ Cf. *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* 4.69 ff.

¹⁷ e.g. *Kūrma*-, *Mārkaṇḍeya*-, *Nāradya*-, *Padma*-, *Skanda*-, *Vāyu*-, and *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* (see e.g. Dasgupta 1940: 496–511). Because the dates of the Purāṇas are uncertain, it is in many cases impossible to say whether the references to Sāṃkhya and Yoga contained in them should be regarded as "pre-" or "post-classical".

¹⁸ These include: Chakravarti 1975: 42–64; Keith 1949, ch. 3; Johnston 1937: passim; Edgerton 1944 II, ch. 8.

¹⁹ See e.g. Gauḍapāda, Māṭhara, and Paramārtha on *SK* 22.

²⁰ Under *SK* 1, Māṭhara describes Sāṃkhya as "presenting the knowledge of *brahman*", thereby implying that *brahman* is identical to the self (*puruṣa*). As if the interpretive situation were not already complicated enough, the *Yuktidīpikā* (on *kārikā* 22) treats *brahman* synonymously with *maḥat*—and *īśvara*!

²¹ See e.g. *MBh* XII.218.14, in which, as Chakravarti notes (1975: 26), "Āsuri in the assembly of the followers of Kapila is found to explain *brahman*, who is one and immutable and seen in diverse forms."

sions of Sāṃkhya and Yoga at all; or alternatively, as at least one provocative writer has done, we might wonder whether it is not these earlier texts that represent the authentic doctrine, and the so-called classical systems that are out of step.²² However, as I have noted already in this chapter, we are talking here about sets of ideas with certain shared family resemblances (to borrow the analogy used in an entirely different context by Wittgenstein (2001 [1953]: §67)), not about identical systems of thought, nor even about variant systems of thought with a shared “essence” or “core”. It remains legitimate to speak of “epic Sāṃkhyas” and “Paurāṇic Sāṃkhyas” due to such sets’ appearing to be drawn from a common gene pool (albeit one that may have been “infected”, as it were, by foreign ideas).

The other observation that I wanted to make on the subject of the epic and Paurāṇic material is that, while *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* often occur together (thereby indicating an intimate association between the two), where this is the case the meaning of these terms seems to bear little direct relation to the systems of philosophy with which we are chiefly concerned. One instance of this from the *Gītā* has already been mentioned in the discussion of the *Śvet.Up* above. A second instance occurs, again in the *Gītā* (ch. 5), where the “blessed lord” (*śrī bhagavān*) says to Arjuna:

Fools (*bālāḥ*) proclaim that sāmkhya and yoga are separate, not the learned (*pañḍitāḥ*).
Diligently abiding in one of them alone, the fruit of both is won. (5.4)

The station reached by adherents of sāmkhya, that too is reached by adherents of yoga.
He who sees that sāmkhya and yoga are one, he [truly] sees. (5.5)²³

As in the earlier passage (3.3 f.), the terms *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* seem to be used here in the sense of “renunciation” and “disciplined activity” respectively. This is further suggested in the succeeding verse (5.6), which reads: “But, without yoga, [only] distress (*duḥkha*) is achieved by renunciation (*saṃnyāsa*) [...]. Fixed in yoga (*yoga-yukta*), the sage goes to brahman in no time.” If *sāṃkhya* is to be considered synonymous with *saṃnyāsa*—as I think is implied in these verses—then we are faced with two contradictory statements: on the one hand, both *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* are declared to be equally successful (and self-sufficient) means of attaining the sought-after goal, while, on the other hand, it is said that *sāṃkhya* can generate only suffering in the absence of *yoga*. We need not dwell upon such contradictions here, however,

²² I have in mind here Daya Krishna’s article, “Is Īśvarakṛṣṇa’s *Sāṃkhya-Kārikā* Really Sāṃkhyan?” (first published in *Philosophy East and West* 18.3 (July 1968): 194–204, and republished in Krishna 1991, ch. 7).

²³ *sāṃkhyayogau prthag bālāḥ pravādanti na pañḍitāḥ / ekam apy āsthitaḥ samyag ubhayor vindate phalam // yat sāmkhyaḥ prāpyate sthānam tad yogair api gamyate / ekam sāmkhyaṃ ca yogaṃ ca yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati //* (*Gītā* 5.4–5). A virtually identical statement is made by Yājñavalkya at *MBh* XII.304.2 (cf. Edgerton 1965: 325).

for the immediate concern is merely to highlight the distinctly non-classical employment of *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* that is exemplified in the *Gītā*.

Although it is evident that *sāṃkhya* does not in the *Gītā* denote any particular metaphysical system, and is, in this respect, applied in a way that seems to differ from classical usage, we should not leave this discussion without noting the possibility—indeed, the likelihood—that the sense of “renunciation” did not fall away entirely from the term in the classical period. The *Sāṃkhyakārikā* is not a work that sets out to vindicate the value of worldly activity (as the *Gītā*, at least in part, tries to do); it starts from the premise that such activity is inherently dissatisfying (*SK* 1, cf. 55), and concludes with an account of the utter relinquishment of experience and of the embodied personality that is its precondition (*SK* 68). It is, in short, a treatise whose guiding principle is the necessity of renunciation. And thus the sense of renunciation is relevant to the term *sāṃkhya* both as it occurs in the *Gītā* and as it applies to the classical system presented in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* (as well as to similar systems). What is different is that, in the systematic expressions of the Sāṃkhya philosophy, in addition to an ascetic orientation, the term *sāṃkhya* implies a particular approach to metaphysics that involves the exposition of certain principles in enumerated sets.²⁴

It is evident that the term *yoga* is used extremely liberally in the *Gītā*, as it is elsewhere in the epic and Paurāṇic literature. Therefore merely from the fact that, in the *Gītā* extracts quoted above, *yoga* appears to be contrasted with the renunciation that *sāṃkhya* stands for, it should not be assumed that *yoga* cannot also, in other contexts, denote a mode of discipline that involves letting go of worldly concerns. In the *Gītā*’s sixth chapter, for example, a form of yoga is described in which the practitioner (*yogin*) “abides in a remote location, alone, controlling mind and self, free from desires and without ‘grasping around’ (*aparigraha*, i.e. not longing for possessions, etc.)” (6.10). His body and mind are restrained in such a way that activity is kept to the barest minimum; mental attention is fixed exclusively within the “self” (*ātman*) (6.18 f.); all desires “coming forth from ideas (*saṃkalpas*)” are to be abandoned “without residue” (*aśeṣata*) (6.24).²⁵ These sorts of stipulations epitomise the kind of ascetic quietism that is so central to the classical Yoga of Patañjali, and are at marked variance to the message of actively fulfilling one’s social duties that is articulated at other places in the *Gītā*

²⁴ The following remark of Edgerton’s makes a similar point with regard to the Upaniṣads and the *MBh* more generally: “It appears, then, that Sāṃkhya means in the Upaniṣads and the Epic simply the way of salvation by knowledge, and does not imply any system of metaphysical truth whatever” (1924: 32). Edgerton is, I think, right to associate *sāṃkhya* with salvific knowledge, but he fails to give due emphasis to its sense as “renunciation”, and this failure is especially noticeable in his translation of the *Gītā*, where he consistently (but, in my view, inappropriately) renders *sāṃkhya* as “reason-method” (see Edgerton 1944 I: 33, 53).

²⁵ This last injunction is refined at *BhG* 18.11, which states that, although actions themselves cannot be “abandoned without residue,” it is the person “who abandons the fruits of action [that] is called the [genuine] abandoner (*tyāgin*).”

(e.g. 1.31 f.; 3.8, 35; 18.41 f.). The common thread that seems to run through all the uses of *yoga* in the *Gītā* and elsewhere is the sense of “disciplined action” as distinguished from merely impulsive behaviour. This might, then, be regarded as the *broad* sense of *yoga*, whereas sustained contemplative practice is a narrower, more restricted, sense.

To conclude this little semantic detour I do not think it impertinent to suggest that, in the sāṃkhya–yoga duad of the *Gītā* that I have been discussing, we have a forerunner (or coeval variant, depending on one’s view of the chronology of the texts concerned) of the two-pronged methodology that is central to both Sāṃkhya and Yoga in their classical forms. The two prongs are *vairāgya* and *abhyāsa* (YS 1.12–16) or (in SK 45) *vairāgya* and *aiśvarya*. *Vairāgya*, insofar as it involves letting go of the “thirsting” after phenomenal enjoyment (YS 1.15), shares much in common with the *Gītā*’s notion of *sāṃkhya* as renunciation. *Abhyāsa*, meanwhile, is the assiduous practice required to achieve the transformation of mind that Yoga demands; and *aiśvarya* (“of Īśvara”) is the power, self-control and composure necessary to eradicate obstacles; both terms having, therefore, an affinity with the broad sense of *yoga* as “disciplined action”.

Other textual sites of preclassical formulations of Sāṃkhya include ancient collections of doctrines and laws such as the *Manusmṛti*, treatises on Āyurveda (notably the *Carakasamhitā* and *Suśrutasamhitā*), and a section in an early (ca. 100 CE) account of the life of the Buddha known as the *Buddhacarita* of Aśvaghoṣa. An earlier, and somewhat oblique, source is Kauṭilya’s *Arthaśāstra* (321–296 BCE), which famously names only three philosophical approaches (*ānvīkṣikī*) in its second verse, these approaches being Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Lokāyata.²⁶ Once again, we cannot assume that *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* denote here anything even approximating the systems associated with Īśvarakṛṣṇa and Patañjali, and nor can we say exactly what is meant by *lokāyata*. The latter term is often associated or identified with the philosophy of Cārvāka, which in turn is taken to be a kind of materialism.²⁷ As Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya has pointed out, however, *lokāyata* can also be understood to mean “prevalent among the people” and, thus, “the philosophy of the people” (1968: 1);²⁸ and, if it is taken in this way, then *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* may, by contrast, stand for those approaches to philosophy (or perhaps life more generally) that are *not* so prevalent, but are, rather, adhered to by select groups of initiates. If this were so, then we need not be surprised that other philo-

²⁶ *sāṃkhyam yogo lokāyatam ceti ānvīkṣikī* (*Arthaśāstra* 1.2).

²⁷ Cf. Radhakrishnan and Moore (1957: 227): “The doctrine [of Cārvāka] is called Lokāyata, as it holds that only this world (*loka*) exists and there is no beyond.”

²⁸ Cf. Cowell and Gough (1882: 2n.1): “Lokāyata may be etymologically analysed as ‘prevalent in the world’ (*loka* and *āyata*).”

sophical or soteriological schools go unmentioned by Kauṭilya; for the sense of *sāṃkhya* (and to a lesser extent of *yoga*) could be sufficiently wide here to cover a range of such schools.

One further contribution to the somewhat perplexing picture of preclassical Sāṃkhya and Yoga is provided by a treatise belonging to the Pāñcarātra sect of Vaiṣṇavism entitled the *Ahīrbudhnya-saṃhitā* (“collection of the serpent-from-the-depths”). The Pāñcarātra, or Bhāgavata, sect is generally held to be at least as old as Buddhism (i.e. ca. fourth century BCE), although the textual sources associated with it are likely to be considerably later. The *Ahīrbudhnya-saṃhitā*, essentially a work of Tantric Vaiṣṇavism, comprises material that was probably composed over a span of several centuries during the first millennium of the Common Era. It contains much that would be of interest to a study of Tantric yoga and the application of Sāṃkhyan concepts thereto, but the reason for mentioning it here is that, in its twelfth chapter are included summaries of two earlier works, or bodies of doctrine (*tantras*), which deal with Sāṃkhya and Yoga respectively. The first of these two summaries (*Ahīr.* 12.18–30) is of the so-called *Ṣaṣṭitantra* (“sixty doctrines”), which itself comprises two parts, one of thirty-two topics and the other of twenty-eight. The expression *ṣaṣṭitantra* also occurs in *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 72, where the claim is made that the seventy *kārikās* which constitute the text’s main part cover the topics of the *ṣaṣṭitantra* but forgo the illustrative examples and objections of opponents. The list of topics given in the *Ahīrbudhnya*’s summary of the *Ṣaṣṭitantra* indicates, however, some important differences between this latter work and that of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, and it is therefore likely that the *Ahīrbudhnya*’s version is not the only *ṣaṣṭitantra*, but is perhaps one of several, which may or may not have shared a common source.

The theory that more than one version of the *ṣaṣṭitantra* existed is supported by Vācaspatimiśra’s commentary on *kārikā* 72, in which he refers to an alternative version that is outlined in a now unavailable text called the *Rājavārtika*.²⁹ This latter version of the *ṣaṣṭitantra* is remarkably—indeed, one might say suspiciously—compatible with Īśvarakṛṣṇa’s text, whereas that summarised in the *Ahīrbudhnya* seems closer to the types of Sāṃkhya presented in certain of the Purāṇas and in some passages of the *Mahābhārata*. By this I mean, for example, that it includes brahman as the ultimate principle, refers to *śakti* (“power”) apparently as a synonym of *prakṛti*, and gives a prominent place to “time” (*kāla*) among the major principles.³⁰

²⁹ Vācaspati includes a list of the sixty doctrines (see Jhā 1896: 113–14).

³⁰ Cf. e.g. *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* 1.2.18 ff. (Upreti 1986); *Nāradya-purāṇa* 1.3.

The other noteworthy summary in the *Ahīrbudhnya-saṃhitā* is of a work on yoga attributed to Hiraṇyagarbha (*Ahīr.* 12.31–38). As has been pointed out above, Hiraṇyagarbha appears to be identified with Kapila in the *Śvet.Up.*, and although no such identification is made in the *Ahīrbudhnya*, the name nevertheless retains an important symbolic resonance. As with the *Śaṣṭitantra*, the summary amounts to little more than a list of contents, divided into two main parts, the first comprising twelve sections and being on the “yoga of cessation” (*nirodha-yoga*), and the second comprising four sections and being on the “yoga of action” (*karma-yoga*). Chakravarti attributes considerable significance to the fact that the treatise is referred to as *yogānuśāsana* (an “exposition of yoga”), which expression also occurs in the opening line of the *Yogasūtra* (*atha yogānuśāsanam*: “now, an exposition of yoga”) (Chakravarti 1975: 70 f.). Furthermore, he draws attention to the use of the term *nirodha*, which also features prominently in the *Yogasūtra*’s first chapter (1.2, 12, 51), and to certain other commonalities, such as the term *aṅga* (“limb”, “member”), and references to different modes of meditation, which can be with or without an “external object” (*bahirtattva*). While such similarities are of significant interest, they cannot possibly justify Chakravarti’s claim that the *Yogasūtra*, despite retaining a certain uniqueness, exhibits a “remarkable dependence” upon the text attributed to Hiraṇyagarbha, and that this dependence “tends to suggest that Patañjali was an adherent of the Hiraṇyagarbha school of the Yoga” (1975: 72). This is, frankly, fantasy. From the evidence that is available, it cannot even be confirmed whether the yoga treatise summarised in the *Ahīrbudhnya* antedates the *Yogasūtra*; and even if it could, the few scraps of information that we have about it can hardly tell us the extent to which the *Yogasūtra*’s compiler borrowed from it. Indeed, just as was the case with the relation between the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and the *Śaṣṭitantra*, it is possible that no direct borrowing occurred at all, and that, instead, the two “expositions of yoga” (i.e. those of “Hiraṇyagarbha” and “Patañjali” respectively) are based upon still earlier material that has, like much else, succumbed to the ravages of time.

THE CLASSICAL SYSTEMS AND THEIR COMMENTARIES

The incomplete nature of the available evidence precludes the possibility of reaching any definitive judgement on the degree of sophistication and coherence achieved by the preclassical forms of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and hence it is the classical forms themselves that are generally held to represent the fully mature stage of these systems’ development. The high status that the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and *Yogasūtra* acquired within the Indian philosophical milieu is attested to by the significant number of commentaries that have been composed upon them, and which

have survived to the present day, and by both the polemical and complimentary references made to the classical systems in the works of other schools and traditions.

Eight early commentaries on the *Kārikā* are known to have survived. There is some uncertainty about the chronological order of these, but one of the first, and perhaps the earliest of all, is a Chinese translation of the *kārikās* with accompanying Chinese commentary. It is agreed that the translation, known in Sanskrit as the *Suvarṇasaptati* (“golden seventy”), was made by the Buddhist sage Paramārtha around 557–569 CE, but there is no consensus of opinion on whether the commentary was authored by the translator or taken from an existing Sanskrit source.³¹ Whatever the facts of the matter might be, knowledge of the approximate date of Paramārtha’s translation has helped to set a temporal limit to the composition of the *Kārikā* itself. Now that I have raised this issue of the latter text’s date, I shall pursue it a little further before coming back to the commentaries in general.

Owing to the existence of Paramārtha’s Chinese translation, the *Kārikā*, whether communicated by oral or written means, must have been composed prior to 569 CE, and probably at least a century or two before this date, since some time would have needed to elapse before it could have attained the authoritative status deserving of translation into a foreign language such as Chinese. An *early* limit to the composition of the *Kārikā* is not so forthcoming, however, despite a date of 350 CE having been settled upon by most recent researchers.³² Much of the research has been based on references to two prominent Sāṃkhya teachers that are said to have lived close to the time of Īśvarakṛṣṇa, one being Vārṣaganya (or Vṛṣagaṇa) and the other being Vindhyavāsa (or Vindhyavāsin). Vārṣaganya is first mentioned in the *Mokṣadharmā* (*MBh* XII.306.57), but this is merely as a name in a list of Sāṃkhya teachers. Both individuals are mentioned in Paramārtha’s biography of the Buddhist teacher, Vasubandhu, with Vindhyavāsa appearing as a disciple of Vārṣaganya. A slightly later Chinese source confuses matters by speaking of “Vārṣaganya” not as a particular person but as the name of a group of followers of Kapila which is headed by a man named Varṣa (meaning “rain”, his being said to have been born in the rainy season).³³ This account carries less authority, however, than a Sanskrit commentary on the *Kārikā* known as the *Yuktidīpikā*, which clearly represents Vārṣaganya, Vindhyavāsin and Īśvarakṛṣṇa as three separate individuals, each of whom has a slightly different perspective on Sāṃkhya.³⁴ Added to this evidence is a reference in the work

³¹ A brief summary of the scholarly debate on this matter is provided by Larson in *EIP* iv: 167–69.

³² e.g. Chakravarti 1975: 158; *EIP* iv: 13, 15, 149.

³³ This alternative etymology of “Vārṣaganya” derives from a work by Kuei-chi, a direct disciple of Hsüan-tsang (seventh century CE). It is discussed by Takakusu (1933) and under “Vārṣaganya” in *EIP* iv: 132 f.

³⁴ Cf. *EIP* iv: 134 f.

of the Buddhist logician, Dignāga (ca. 480–540 CE), to the Sāṃkhya advocate Mādhava as a “destroyer of Sāṃkhya” (*sāṃkhya-nāśaka*), that is, as one whose views are at such variance to a standard Sāṃkhya position that they undermine it. This has been taken to suggest the presence by Dignāga’s time of a standard Sāṃkhya viewpoint, which is to be distinguished from unorthodox positions such as Mādhava’s; and the most likely candidate for this standard is the classical system of Īśvarakṛṣṇa. In my view, none of this constitutes sound evidence for postulating 350 CE as the earliest likely date for the *Kārikā*. The references to Vārṣaganya and Vindhyavāsin in the *Yuktidīpikā* give no indication of the respective dates of these individuals, and the same is true of the references to Īśvarakṛṣṇa himself. Paramārtha’s biography of Vasubandhu does at least state that Vindhyavāsa lived “nine-hundred years after the death of the Buddha” (the Buddha having died, according to recent estimates, around 400 BCE), and that this same Vindhyavāsa studied under Vṛṣaganya’s (i.e. Vārṣaganya’s) tutelage, thereby indicating that the two men were contemporaries. But it would be reckless to assume that Paramārtha’s principal concern was historical accuracy. It is a common practice in accounts of the lives of renowned sages composed by their disciples and admirers for the subject of the work to be associated with other eminent figures, whether as friend or opponent, in order to enhance the prestige of that subject. Needless to say, it is immensely difficult to determine the intentions and historiographical honesty of an author some fourteen centuries after his work was composed. In the present case concerning the time-frame of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, then, I would concur with the latest date’s being around 450 CE, but would be inclined to emphasise the insubstantiality of the evidence for any earliest date rather than implying that its composition can confidently be narrowed down to a one-hundred year period. If we accept that more than one, and possibly a great number, of versions of a philosophical system can exist contemporaneously, then there is no strong reason that I can discern even for assuming that the *Kārikā* belongs to the Common Era. (Of course, scholars like to feel confident, or at least to sound as though they feel confident; but in this instance there really isn’t much to go on at all.)

A few brief remarks need to be made at this juncture concerning the integrity of the *Kārikā*. In comparison with the controversies that surround many texts of similar antiquity, the issue of what material belongs and does not belong in it is fairly untroublesome. What appear in most editions as the final two *kārikās*, numbered 72 and 73, are not mentioned by all commentators, thus suggesting the possibility that these two are later additions. This is highly likely since the last two *kārikās* merely laud the text as a whole (SK 73) and propose, as has been noted above, that it is a concise exposition of the *ṣaṣṭitantra* (SK 72). They contain nothing of philosophical significance, and therefore it is hardly worth speculating about their

authorship. The only other kārikā that has been queried is the sixty-third, which happens to be absent from Paramārtha's Chinese version. Since there are no other known commentaries from which it is missing, my inclination would be to regard this as a quirk of the Paramārtha text and not as evidence that what has come to be numbered as kārikā 63 is an interpolation by someone other than Īśvarakṛṣṇa. Suryanarayana Sastri has taken the opposite view on the grounds that kārikā 63 is philosophically redundant, merely reasserting what has already been stated at kārikās 44–45;³⁵ and some other scholars (among them, apparently, Potter and Larson (*EIP* iv: 151)) have taken this suggestion seriously. If kārikā 63 is interpreted in a particular way then there is indeed an overlap with kārikā 44. But the emphasis in the two kārikās remains very different, the earlier of the two being far more matter-of-fact in its account of the “predispositions” or “personal characteristics” (*bhāvas*), whereas kārikā 63 is part of a veritable crescendo of kārikās building up to the description of the final separation between puruṣa and prakṛti that occurs at kārikā 68. In my view, it is not even certain that the “forms” (*rūpas*) mentioned at kārikā 63 are “predispositions” at all. The “seven forms” by which prakṛti is there said to bind herself may in fact be seven categories of her manifest aspect, the most likely candidates being: (1) mahat, (2) ahaṃkāra, (3) manas, (4) buddhīndriyas, (5) karmendriyas, (6) tanmātras, and (7) bhūtas. And, correspondingly, the “one form” by which “she releases herself for the sake of each puruṣa” may be prakṛti's unmanifest aspect, which is really the absence of any form whatsoever. Whatever the case may be, however, there is no reason to regard kārikā 63 as dispensable.

I noted above that eight early commentaries upon the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* have survived. So far Paramārtha's *Suvarṇasaptati* and the *Yuktidīpikā* have been mentioned, and the approximate date of the former has been placed at 557–569 CE. The respective dates of the commentaries are of no great consequence to my main purposes in this study, and therefore in most cases I shall simply note the dates that have been most commonly agreed upon without devoting much, if any, attention to the respective merits of the arguments supporting them.

In addition to the *Suvarṇasaptati*, three commentaries are generally placed in the period from 500–600 CE. One of these, the *Sāṃkhyavṛtti*, remains anonymous; and, in the case of another, the *Sāṃkhyasaptativṛtti*, because of damage to the one existing palm leaf manuscript, we know only that the author's name began with the syllable *Ma*. Esther Solomon (1974; *EIP* iv: 179) has speculated that the *Sāṃkhyavṛtti* may be an autocommentary (*svopajñavṛtti*) by Īśvarakṛṣṇa himself, but there is no particular reason for supposing this to be true. The *Sāṃkhyasaptativṛtti* closely resembles a commentary eponymously titled the *Māṭharavṛtti*,

³⁵ Suryanarayana Sastri's position is outlined by Mainkar (1972: 33) and in *EIP* iv (p. 151).

which is usually thought to be a few centuries later (post-800 CE). The latter text is likely to be an expanded and slightly modified version of the former.³⁶

The fourth of the commentaries held to date from the sixth century, which I have not yet mentioned here, is that referred to as the *Sāṃkhyakārikābhāṣya* or as the *Gauḍapādabhāṣya* after the name of its author, Gauḍapāda, about whom nothing further is known. His name is shared by the author of a well-known series of *kārikās* that take the *Māṇḍūkya-upaniṣad* as their starting-point, but there are no significant textual or philosophical similarities that might indicate a common authorship. Indeed, the *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* (or *Gauḍapādīyakārikā*) is usually taken to be a statement of nondualist (*advaita*) Vedānta, which harbours no sympathy for the dualist position of classical Sāṃkhya.

The *Yuktidīpikā*, which has been briefly referred to above, is widely regarded as the most important of all the commentaries on the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*. Larson's enthusiasm is obvious: "No other text compares with it in terms of its detailed treatment of Sāṃkhya arguments and its apparent thorough familiarity with the various teachers and schools that preceded Īśvarakṛṣṇa, and it is no exaggeration to assert, therefore, that it is the *only* commentary on the *Kārikā* that appears to understand the full scope and details of classical Sāṃkhya philosophy" (*EIP* iv: 227). Such comments are, however, somewhat over-flattering, and Larson admits elsewhere (1979: 281) that the value of the *Yuktidīpikā* is due more to its historical than its philosophical significance. Neither the author nor the date of the commentary are known, but since it quotes Dignāga and Bhartṛhari, and makes no reference to Vācaspati, it has been placed between the early sixth and the tenth century (*EIP* iv: 228, citing Pandeya 1967: xv). It was rediscovered by scholars as recently as the 1930s, and at least two manuscripts are known to exist, neither of them complete, but comprehensive nevertheless.³⁷

The two commentaries on the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* that remain to be mentioned here are the *Jayamaṅgalā*³⁸ and the *Tattvakaumudī*. The author of the first of these is not known, although he has been assumed to be a Buddhist due to the inclusion of a benedictory verse to the sage (*muni*) of the *loka-uttara-vādins* (which is the name of a Buddhist sect) (cf. Kaviraj 1926; Chakravarti 1975: 165). Whether he was, or was not, a Buddhist, there is nothing in the commentary itself to suggest that he was writing from a Buddhist standpoint. Indeed, the *Jayamaṅgalā* diverges little from the interpretive line taken by the four earliest commentaries (i.e. those in the 500–600 CE timeframe discussed above). Certain indications that it relies on

³⁶ See the respective introductions to the entries on *Sāṃkhyasaptatīpikā* and *Māṇḍūkya* in *EIP* iv.

³⁷ The *Yuktidīpikā* has now been published in several editions. The first volume of a critical edition (edited by Wetzler and Motegi) was published in 1998.

³⁸ Not to be confused with a well-known commentary on the *Kāmasūtra* of the same name.

the *Yuktidīpikā*, however, combined with Chakravarti's observation that Vācaspati denies (at TK 51) a viewpoint that appears only in the *Jayamaṅgalā*, has set the date of the latter text between the sixth and tenth centuries (Chakravarti 1975: 166–68; cf. Kaviraj 1926).³⁹

This brings us to Vācaspatimiśra's *Tattvakaumudī* itself, which, as Larson has noted, "is by far the best-known text of Sāṃkhya all over India" (*EIP* iv: 302). It has survived in at least ninety manuscripts, and these were utilised to produce a critical edition in 1967 (edited by Srinivasan). Vācaspati composed works on several schools of Indian philosophy, and there is nothing in the *Tattvakaumudī* or anywhere else to show that he was especially committed to the Sāṃkhya system. His style is, however, highly accessible, and he provides some helpful interpretive suggestions on a number of points. There is an ambiguity pertaining to his dates, for the reason that, in his *Nyāyasūcīnibandha*, he notes that the work was composed in 898, but it is unclear whether this date accords with the Vikrama era (which begun in 58 BCE) or with the Śaka era (78 CE onwards). The dispute as to whether Vācaspati flourished in the mid-ninth or the mid-to-late-tenth century still continues.

The commentaries upon the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* that have been introduced above are generally represented as constituting a classical Sāṃkhya tradition, in which the commentarial authors in large measure merely reiterate, and in certain instances expand upon, the exposition given in the *Kārikā* itself. As I have explained in the Introduction to this study, I regard this assumption of a broadly unified classical tradition as misleading, and consider it more helpful to treat the commentaries as contributions to a discussion and interpretation of the classical text, which remains a site of disputation. The fact that manuscripts of the eight commentaries mentioned above have survived to the present day is perhaps indicative of the relatively high status of these particular commentaries; but it is inevitably the case that many others of comparable authority are likely to have been lost along the way, and that accidents of history are largely responsible for determining what we today take to represent classical Sāṃkhya and the line of interpretation to which it gave rise (just as, of course, such accidents are similarly responsible in the case of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga traditions more generally). For reasons such as this, a

³⁹ Ramakrishna Kavi (1927) alternatively proposes that the composer of the *Jayamaṅgalā* was a certain (non-Buddhist) named Śaṅkara-ārya, who lived in the fourteenth century and was also the author of the *Yogasūtrabhāṣyavivarana* (which several other scholars (e.g. Hacker 1968; Mayeda 1979) have attributed to the renowned Vedāntin Śaṅkarācārya (see discussion in Halbfass 1991, ch. 6)). There is little, however, to support Kavi's claims, and therefore Chakravarti's appears to be the most sober and plausible assessment of the available evidence. [As an aside, and since it is illustrative of the kinds of minor confusions that can arise in this academic area, it may be pointed out that the author of the introduction to the entry on *Jayamaṅgalā* in *EIP* iv (p. 271), who I presume to be R. S. Bhattacharya (since the summary of the text that follows the introductory passage is by him), mistakenly identifies Ramakrishna Kavi with Gopinath Kaviraj, thereby giving the impression that the latter put forward two radically conflicting theories.]

cautious and discerning attitude is, I think, appropriate when dealing with the commentarial literature.

Turning now to classical Yoga, it may not come as a great surprise to hear that there is a considerable amount of mystery associated with its origins and founder. The Yoga tradition attributes the *Yogasūtra* to a sage named Patañjali, who is traditionally lauded as an incarnation of the thousand-headed serpent known in Indian mythology as *Ananta* (“unending”, “infinite”) or *Ādiśeṣa* (the “initial trace” or “primordial residue”).⁴⁰ At least since the time of Bhojarāja’s commentary (ca. tenth or eleventh century CE) this sage has been identified with the Patañjali who composed the famous “great commentary” (*Mahābhāṣya* or *Vyākaraṇamahābhāṣya*) on Pāṇini’s grammatical work, *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, and also with a redactor of Caraka’s compendium on Āyurveda. Bhoja (or a later interpolator) included in the introduction to his *Rājamārtaṇḍa* a stanza in which he (Bhoja) is compared with Patañjali on the grounds that both of them are responsible for “purifying speech, mind, and body” by composing works on grammar, yoga and medicine (Dasgupta 1922: 230 ff.). A commentary by Cakrapāṇi on the *Carakasamhitā*, dating from around 1060 CE, also praises Patañjali for these three achievements and explicitly attributes to him the *Mahābhāṣya* and a revised version of Caraka’s text (*caraka-pratisaṃskṛta*) (Dasgupta *ibid.*). Similar benedictory verses have been included in manuscripts and published editions of both the *Mahābhāṣya* and the *Yogasūtra* up to the present day, and the identity of the three Patañjalis is widely taken for granted by Indian practitioners of yoga who are unfamiliar with academic debates. The matter has still not been finally settled by scholars, although the general tendency is to reject the identity thesis.

The view that the author of the *Yogasūtra* also edited and revised the *Carakasamhitā* was seriously questioned by Dasgupta (*ibid.*), and I am not aware of any subsequent defence of the view. The identification of the “Yoga Patañjali” with his grammarian namesake, however, has been a matter of more persistent controversy. J. H. Woods firmly denounces the thesis in the Introduction to his translation of the *Yogasūtra* (1914), partly as the result of a comparison between the philosophical content of this text and that of the *Mahābhāṣya*, but also because he accepts the view presented in Vācaspati’s *Tattvavaiśārādī* that certain sūtras contain an attack on the “idealist” school of Buddhism known as *viññānavāda* (“consciousness[-only] view”). Taken together, this evidence leads Woods to propose a time-period of 300–500 CE for the *Yogasūtra*, considerably later than the second century BCE, which is the period generally

⁴⁰ A selection of legends traditionally associated with Patañjali were brought together by Rāmahadrādīkṣita in his *Patañjalicarita*, which, according to Śrīvatsa Rāmaswāmī (2000: 28), was composed “over three hundred years ago” (i.e. ca. 1700 CE or earlier), but which others have placed as “not [...] earlier than the eighteenth century” (Dasgupta 1922: 230). Rāmaswāmī provides a summary of the legends at ch. 2.

agreed upon for the *Mahābhāṣya*.⁴¹ Dasgupta, however, carries out his own comparison of the texts and concludes that there is nothing in them that indicates a difference of opinion on any significant issue (1922: 231 f.). Furthermore, he cites a number of passages in the *Mahābhāṣya* that illustrate an acquaintance with “most of the important points of the Sāṃkhya–Yoga metaphysics” on the part of its author (p. 232). Dasgupta addresses the matter of Yoga’s supposedly anti-idealist critique, not by reinterpreting the salient sūtras, but by proposing that the fourth chapter (“Kaivalyapāda”) of the *Yogasūtra*, in which those sūtras appear, is a later addition to the work by someone other than Patañjali (1922: 229–30). This proposal may sound suspiciously ad hoc, but, as Dasgupta rightly points out (p. 230), the third chapter ends with the expression *iti*, which is roughly equivalent to the Latin *finis*, denoting the end of a work. It is also notable that the fourth chapter displays certain features that distinguish it from other portions of the *Yogasūtra*; it is, for example, considerably shorter than the other three chapters, and yet on the whole it is more philosophically engaging. Furthermore (although Dasgupta does not mention this point), the fourth chapter employs a number of important terms that either do not occur at all or are used very sparingly in other parts of the text.⁴² It would not be especially surprising if this chapter did turn out to be a later addition, for, in my view (which would, on this point, not have been shared by Dasgupta), the *Yogasūtra* as a whole comes across as being a compilation of passages from diverse sources rather than the unified expression of a single mind. Certain scholars, most notably J. W. Hauer (1958), have devoted a considerable amount of effort and attention to the task of breaking the text down into its possible constituent parts; but it is difficult to see how any firm conclusions can be reached on this matter.

One major consequence of taking the view that the *Yogasūtra* is in whole or in part a compilation of earlier sources is that the debate over whether its author also composed the *Mahābhāṣya* is significantly transformed. Woods’ approach of looking for similarities and dissimilarities of style and content between the two texts, which approach is also taken (though with different conclusions) by Dasgupta, becomes virtually redundant; for one is no longer comparing the works of single authors, but, instead, the work of one author with that of an indefinite number of others, brought together over an indefinite period of time by an indefinite number of compilers. Neither the *Mahābhāṣya* nor the *Yogasūtra* claims originality

⁴¹ See Woods 1914: xv ff. My own view on the question of whether the *YS* includes an anti-idealist polemic will be presented in Chapter 4 below.

⁴² Those which appear exclusively in the fourth chapter include *buddhi* (4.21, 22), *citi* (4.22), *citiśakti* (4.34), *dharmamegha* (4.29), and *vāsanā* (4.8, 24). *Prakṛti* occurs twice there (4.2, 3), while its only other appearance is as part of the conjunct expression *prakṛtilaya* (“dissolution in (or of) prakṛti”) at 1.19. Also *vastu* is particularly prevalent in a series of sūtras in the fourth chapter (4.14–17), whereas it appears only once elsewhere (1.9), its sense of “object”, “thing”, or “entity” more often being conveyed by *artha*.

for itself, but rather begins by declaring itself to be an “exposition” (*anūsāsana*) of a pre-existing body of teaching. In the case of the *Mahābhāṣya*, the teaching being explicated is Pāṇini’s work on *śabda* (“word”, “language”), whereas in the *Yogasūtra* the source of the teachings concerned is said to be *īśvara* (the “lord”), or at least this is implied in the statement that *īśvara* was the guru of yogins who have gone before (YS 1.26). The fact that the expression “*atha* [...] *anūsāsanam*” occurs in the opening line of both works is remarkable but not exceptional. *Atha* is considered to be an auspicious invocatory term, somewhat analogous to *om*, and as such often appears at the beginning of treatises, especially those composed in the *sūtra* format.⁴³ It is most often, and most concisely, translated as “now,” but should be understood in the sense of “And so commences...”. The occurrence in the *Ahīrbudhnya-saṃhitā* of the phrases “great exposition of yoga” (*mahadyogānūsāsanam*, 12.31) and “exposition of the doctrine of yoga” (*yogānūsāsanam śāstram*, 12.38) shows that there has been at least one other work, which may pre-date the *Yogasūtra*, that has presented itself as an exposition of yoga. As has been noted already, this does not constitute a clear indication that the *Yogasūtra* borrowed significantly from the “Hiraṇyagarbha” text that the *Ahīrbudhnya-saṃhitā* summarises, but it should at least make us question whether the *Yogasūtra*’s opening line really gives us any sound reason to identify its author with that of the *Mahābhāṣya*.⁴⁴

Before moving on from (and regrettably, if unavoidably, leaving unresolved) the issue of who might be responsible for the *Yogasūtra*, I should mention what Dasgupta considers to be the clinching piece of evidence for the identification thesis we have been discussing. “The most important point in favour of this identification”, he states, “seems to be that both the Patañjalis as against other Indian systems admitted the doctrine of *sphoṭa* which was denied even by Sāṃkhya” (1922: 238 fn.1; cf. Dasgupta 1920, Appendix 1). Very briefly, the term *sphoṭa* translates literally as “bursting forth” or “erupting” (cf. “spurt”, “spout”, etc.), and may be taken to express the idea that the meanings of certain sounds and symbols are already present in the minds of the members of a linguistic community prior to the instantiation of interpersonal communicative episodes. Such episodes merely allow, or provide the occasion for, the appropriate meanings to “burst forth” in the sense of being revealed or manifested in the mind of the “receiving” communicant rather than being conveyed *to* that mind (cf. Nāgeśabhaṭṭa, in Krishnamacharya 1956: 5). Some version of the *sphoṭa* theory was undoubtedly maintained by the author of the *Mahābhāṣya*, and it would indeed be a matter of some

⁴³ Cf. e.g. *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.1; *Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.1; *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* 1.1.1. Cf. also Śaṅkara on *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.1: “the word *atha*, even when used in some other sense, serves the purpose of auspiciousness from the very fact of its being heard” (trans. Gambhirananda 1965: 7).

⁴⁴ I am here questioning Dasgupta’s assertion that “*unlike any other work*” the *Mahābhāṣya* and *Yogasūtra* both begin “in a similar manner” (1922: 232, emphasis added).

interest to find signs of it in the *Yogasūtra* (although it is difficult to see how such signs could win the case for the identification thesis). But it was in any event a false alarm: there is no reference to *sphoṭa* in the *Yogasūtra*; there is merely one sūtra (3.17) that commentators have typically used as a springboard to embark upon grammatical rambles which, in certain instances, and most notably in Vācaspati's subcommentary, could be interpreted as imputing the *sphoṭa* theory to Yoga.⁴⁵ The sūtra itself states that "verbal expression" (*śabda*), "objectual content" (*artha*), and "phenomenal representation" (*pratyaya*), though commonly conflated, can be distinguished by means of sustained meditation (*saṃyama*) upon their difference.⁴⁶ It adds that such meditation reveals the "speech of all beings" (*sarva-bhūta-rūta*), which expression presumably has symbolic meaning, although it is generally taken literally within the Yoga tradition. Whatever the case may be, the mere distinguishing of *śabda*, *artha*, and *pratyaya* from one another falls very far short of an affirmation of the *sphoṭa* theory, and therefore I think we can safely dismiss this "most important point in favour of the identification" of the two "Patañjalis" as fanciful.

Along with Feuerstein (1979a: 3), among others, I am bound, then, to register my "profound ignorance about the historical personality of the author of the *Yoga-Sūtra*," but unlike Feuerstein I would also remain non-committal on the issue of the date of the text, for I can see no firm grounds for confidently asserting the *Yogasūtra* to be "a product of the third century A.D." (or the second century, according to later works by Feuerstein (e.g. 1989: 169 and 1998: 284)). I will say a little more in Chapter 2 about my own modest speculations on the processes by means of which the *Yogasūtra*, and also the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, may have come into existence, but for now I can merely report that the current most favoured time period for the *Yogasūtra*'s composition is 100–300 CE.⁴⁷

With regard to the *Yogasūtra*'s commentaries, one in particular has acquired such an eminent status that the majority of other known commentaries take the form of subcommentaries upon it, and many published editions of the *Yogasūtra* include it along with the original sūtras. This is the *Bhāṣya* that is universally attributed to Vyāsa (or "Vedavyāsa"). Such a name is really equivalent to saying that we have no idea who composed the work, for *vyāsa* literally means "arranger" or "compiler" (and, according to Bhāratī (2001: lii), "analysis" as well). The term has, however, accumulated a somewhat overburdening weight of legendary associations,

⁴⁵ Feuerstein holds Vācaspati to be entirely to "blame for this whole confusion" (1980: 119).

⁴⁶ Cf. *YS* 1.42, where *savitarka-samāpatti* is defined as a mental state in which *śabda*, *artha* and *jñāna* remain intermixed (*saṃkīrṇa*). Here *jñāna* can be regarded as serving the same semantic function as *pratyaya* in *YS* 3.17, i.e. to mean "phenomenal representation"; but it is terminological inconsistencies such as this that ought to alert us to the likelihood of the *YS*'s being a composite text.

⁴⁷ A very concise summary of the views of various scholars is given by Whicher (1998a: 42).

for it is to Vyāsa that the authorship of some of India's most vaunted religious and mythological works has been ascribed, including no less than the Vedas, the *Mahābhārata*, the Purāṇas, and the *Brahmasūtra*. In comparison with such esteemed and, with the exception of the last mentioned, *voluminous* material, a commentary upon the *Yogasūtra* appears downright meagre and overshadowed. Indeed, it is surprising that it ever managed to become assimilated into the inventory of Vyāsa's works; but the name has stuck. It is often referred to simply as the *Vyāsa-bhāṣya*, but is also known as the *Yoga-* or *Yogasūtra-bhāṣya*, and as the *Sāṃkhyapravacana-bhāṣya*, the *Yogasūtra* itself being widely regarded as an "expression" or "verbal presentation" (*pravacana*) of the Sāṃkhya teachings. No scholar seriously entertains that the author of the *Yogabhāṣya* could be identical with that of the *Brahmasūtra*, or indeed with the myriad authors that must have been required to produce the other works traditionally ascribed to Vyāsa, but the association of the name with the *Yogabhāṣya* is significant because it is suggestive of the authority that has been accorded to this particular commentary. Estimates of its date tend to gravitate towards the fifth and sixth centuries CE.

Opinions on how useful the *Yogabhāṣya* is in assisting our comprehension of the *Yogasūtra* vary enormously. At one extreme there is the view that Vyāsa is a "great Yoga authority", whose commentary "illuminates our understanding of Patañjali's thought" (Whicher 1998a: 2, 28). It has even been speculatively suggested (Bhāratī 2001: lii) that the *Bhāṣya* might be an autocommentary (*svopajñāṭikā*) by Patañjali himself! At the other extreme is the view that the commentary is in many instances, and perhaps in most, an unhelpful distraction from the genuine meaning of the sūtras, and that its author tries to impose upon the Yoga material an interpretation unduly biased towards Sāṃkhya.⁴⁸ Between these two extremes is a continuum of viewpoints that regard the *Bhāṣya* as being more or less useful in its exposition of the classical text. My own view is that both of the extreme positions just outlined are, for separate reasons, unwarranted. The *Bhāṣya* certainly appears, on occasions, to be following its own agenda, and thus can be said to be "imposing" certain interpretations upon the original text; but to characterise this imposition as Sāṃkhya philosophy being foisted upon an independent Yoga system is highly misleading. Vyāsa's interpretation might lack subtlety and sophistication in places, but the Sāṃkhya viewpoint is already present in the sūtras themselves. Moreover, in many instances he furnishes us with extrapolations of the sūtras that are either perfectly plausible or at least worthy of exegetical consideration. In addition he helps to embed the sūtras within the broader context of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga traditions, especially by his insertion of quotations from earlier exponents of related philosophies (whose names we

⁴⁸ Feuerstein (1979b: 25) approvingly quotes Hauer to this effect, and reiterates the view in the Preface to his own major work on classical Yoga (1980: ix-x).

sometimes learn only from later subcommentaries, most notably that of Vācaspati). My own assessment of the *Bhāṣya* leads me to treat it, along with the other commentaries upon the *Yogasūtra*, critically and discerningly, neither ignoring it nor accepting its interpretations as unquestionable.

The *Yogasūtra* is responsible for inspiring innumerable commentaries, several of which, as noted above, take the form of subcommentaries upon Vyāsa's *Bhāṣya*. Descriptions and summaries of these texts can be found elsewhere (e.g. Arya 1986: 9–13; Feuerstein 1998: 312–15). I shall do little more here than provide a list, along with approximate dates and a minimal amount of descriptive comment.

- *Tattvavaiśārādī*: a subcommentary (*ṭīkā*) by Vācaspatimiśra upon the *Yogabhāṣya*. Either ca. 850 or late tenth century CE (the difficulty pertaining to Vācaspati's dates has been outlined above).
- *Rājamārtanḍa* or *Bhojavṛtti*: a commentary upon the *Yogasūtra* by Bhojarāja (a.k.a. Bhojadeva) (1019–1054 CE), which is largely independent of the *Yogabhāṣya*.
- *Kitāb pātanjali* ("book of Patañjali"): a loose rendering of the *Yogasūtra* plus an unspecified commentary into Persian by Al-bīrūnī (eleventh century CE).⁴⁹ Al-bīrūnī is also responsible for a translation into Persian of a Sāṃkhya text, which he ascribes to Kapila.
- *Yogasūtrabhāṣyavivarāṇa*: a subcommentary upon the *Yogabhāṣya* composed by a certain Śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda. The commentator's name has inevitably generated theories that he may have been the famous Vedāntin, Śaṅkarācārya, prior (according to Hacker 1968) to a conversion from Yoga to Advaita; but, although such speculations have not entirely been laid to rest, the current predominant view is that the *vivarāṇa* belongs to the fourteenth century CE.⁵⁰
- *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*: a major work by the fourteenth-century Vedāntin (in the lineage of Śaṅkarācārya), Mādhava, in which sixteen philosophical systems or approaches are summarised in an order that, unsurprisingly, implies the supremacy of Advaita Vedānta. Although not strictly a commentary, the chapter on Yoga provides a fair account of the classical system and, in doing so, serves to illustrate the high status that this system held during the medieval period. (A separate chapter on the classical Sāṃkhya of Īśvarakṛṣṇa is also included.)
- *Yogasiddhāntacandrikā*: a commentary (*bhāṣya*) upon the *Yogasūtra* by Nārāyaṇatīrtha (late fifteenth or sixteenth century CE). A follower of Vallabhācārya's "pure nondualist" (*śuddhādvaita*) interpretation of Vedānta, Nārāyaṇatīrtha adopts a strongly devotional (*bhakti*)

⁴⁹ So loose is the translation that Dasgupta (1922: 233) suspects that it must be based on a non-standard version of the *YS*.

⁵⁰ Cf. p. 29 fn.39 above, and also Rukmani (1992: passim) and Leggett (1990: 39).

approach to yoga both in this substantial commentary and in his shorter *vṛtti* entitled *Sūtrārthabodhinī*. A significant novelty of both works is the author's relating certain aspects of Tantric symbolism (e.g. *cakras* and *kuṇḍalinīśakti*) to the classical Yoga system.

- *Yogavārttika*: a subcommentary (*vārttika* or *ītkā*) on Vyāsa by Vijñānabhikṣu (sixteenth century CE), who is also responsible for the more concise *Yogasārasaṃgraha*. Vijñānabhikṣu has a particular philosophical position that he tries to promote through all of his works, including his commentaries. It consists in an attempted synthesis of the major Indian systems of thought, with his own interpretation of Vedānta as the umbrella under which the other systems are subsumed.
- *Yogānuśāsanasūtravṛtti* (a.k.a. *Pradīpikā* or *Pradīpa*): largely a summary of Vijñānabhikṣu's *Vārttika* by one of his own disciples, Bhāvāgaṇeśadīkṣita (ca. late sixteenth century CE).
- *Bṛhatī* and *Laghvī*: two subcommentaries (*vṛttis*) on Vyāsa by Nāgeśabhaṭṭa (a.k.a. Nāgojībhaṭṭa) (ca. late sixteenth century CE), who is well known for his works on grammar and Vedānta. Like Vijñānabhikṣu and Bhāvāgaṇeśa, Nāgeśa makes it his aim to demonstrate that a unifying soteriological thread connects the classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga position with that of the principal sources of Vedānta, especially the Upaniṣads, the *Gītā*, and the *Brahmasūtra*. Again, however, as in the previous cases, this project tends to involve a suppression of the distinctively non-Vedāntic elements in the Sāṃkhya and Yoga material.
- *Maṇiprabhā*: a short subcommentary on Vyāsa by Rāmānandayati (sixteenth century CE).

More recent commentaries include, from the eighteenth century, Sadāśivendra's *Yogasudhākāra*; from the eighteenth or nineteenth century, Anantadeva's *Padacandrikā*, Rāghavānanda's *Pātañjalarahasya*, and Rāmabhadradīkṣita's *Patañjalicarita*; and, from the twentieth century, Baladevamiśra's *Pradīpikā* and Hariharānanda Āraṇya's *Bhāsvatī*. With a growing popular interest in certain aspects of yoga in the West, commentaries upon the *Yogasūtra* have probably never been so prolifically manufactured nor so readily available as they are today. This is not, however, to say that the sharpness of philosophical analysis and depth of soteriological understanding conducive to composing such commentaries are always as prevalent as might be desired.

POST-CLASSICAL DEVELOPMENTS

In order to complete this historical overview it is necessary to say something about the ways in which the systems of Sāṃkhya and Yoga developed subsequent to their classical formulations. If any general point deserves to be made here it is that, during the centuries immediately fol-

lowing the period to which the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and *Yogasūtra* have been ascribed, there appears to have been a significant growth, or possibly a resurgence, in the loosely affiliated panoply of sects and lineages that are generally bundled together under the term “Tantra” or “Tantrism”. This is important for various reasons, not least of which is the fact that among the features that are broadly shared by Tantric schools and traditions are, firstly, an emphasis upon bipolarity symbolism and, secondly, the promotion of yogic methods of contemplation (though, admittedly, often highly ritualised) as the optimum soteriological approach.

The bipolarity symbolism adopted by many Tantric groups takes the form of a divine opposition between a male and a female deity. In Hindu and Jain traditions, the male deity typically represents “knowledge” (*jñāna*) or “consciousness” (*cit*), and is, in himself, inactive, while the female deity stands for “power” or “energy” (*śakti*) and the capacity to act and to manifest in any number of forms. For adherents of Śaiva and Śākta sects, the male deity would be some version of *śiva* (often in one of his “fearsome” aspects such as *bhairava*) and the female counterpart would be *pārvatī* (or *durgā*, *bhairavī*, etc.), whereas for Vaiṣṇavas the deities would be versions of *viṣṇu* (or *nārāyaṇa*) and *lakṣmī* (or *nārāyaṇī*, etc.). In Vajrayāna Buddhism, and in Buddhist Tantra more widely, the poles are reversed, the female being static “wisdom” or “insight” (*prajñā*) and the male being dynamic “compassion” (*karuṇā*) (cf. Bharati 1965: 200 ff.)

There is an obvious parallel between the kind of polarity symbolism just outlined (at least in its non-Buddhist varieties) and the encounter between *puruṣa* (a passive, masculine spectator) and *prakṛti* (a dynamic, feminine performer) that is depicted in the Sāṃkhya material. Many who have looked at the issue agree that the parallel is too close to be coincidental; but in view of the obscurity that pervades early medieval Indian history, determining a direction of influence between Tantra and Sāṃkhya is hardly a straightforward task. Many historical accounts of Sāṃkhya and Yoga give scant attention to Tantra, preferring to stick closely or exclusively to the less ritualistic and less symbolically elaborated strands of Indian soteriology. Scholars with a particular interest in Tantra, meanwhile, have been less reticent about expressing opinions on the relationship. Agehananda Bharati, for example, asserts that the polarity symbolism of Tantra “has its philosophical background in the Sāṃkhya system,” which he, far from uniquely, holds to be “the oldest systematized metaphysical school in India” (1965: 204). Others have suggested that many of the principal concepts associated with Sāṃkhya are so widely spread throughout Indian culture that they tend to be drawn upon and assimilated by various religious and philosophical groups, including those characterised as Tantric, without

there being any identifiable lineage of transmission.⁵¹ A renegade stance is taken by Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, who claims that Tantrism is far older than has generally been assumed, and that Sāṃkhya, rather than being a major source of Tantric concepts, is in fact “an explicit philosophical re-statement of the fundamental theoretical position implicit in Tantrism” (1968: 362). Chattopadhyaya’s broader theory is that Tantrism (and hence Sāṃkhya) has its origin in popular non-Vedic tribal traditions that antedate the Upaniṣads and are essentially materialist (!) in orientation (see e.g. 1968: xvi ff.). This is speculative to the point of wanton fantasy, and is strongly influenced by its author’s idiosyncratic interpretation of Marxist historicism. We need not, however, burden ourselves with such ideological encumbrances in order to acknowledge a close relation between Sāṃkhya and Tantra.

In many Tantric systems there is an explicit avowal of monism, or “nondualism” (*advaita*), which might appear to contradict the connection with Sāṃkhya. Such avowals tend, however, to occur at the theoretical level without being fully realised in the Tantric symbolism, which remains flagrantly dualist. In certain systems, the metaphysical schema of classical Sāṃkhya, comprising twenty-five principles, is embellished in an attempt to form a conceptual bridge between the mutually irreducible principles of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* and a monistic absolute. For example, in the medieval nondualist Śaiva school of Kashmir, which superseded the earlier dualistically-inclined Śaivasiddhānta and whose most notable exponent was Abhinavagupta (tenth century CE), eleven such principles (*tattvas*) are added, making a total of thirty-six. The supreme principle is *śiva* (also called *bhairava*, *parameśvara*, etc.), and all the lesser principles are, in some sense, his manifestation. The feminine aspect is said to always accompany Śiva as his “power” (*śakti*), which is expressed as active compassion or “grace” (*anugraha*).⁵² Thus we see that there is an attempt to affirm the self-sufficiency and pre-eminent authority of the absolute Śiva while simultaneously enthroning a feminine principle alongside him. This manoeuvre is achieved by the use of poetic metaphors that leave the ontological status of Śakti profoundly ambiguous. She is “non-different” (*avibhāga*)⁵³ and not to be conceived as “separate” (*bheda*) from Śiva,⁵⁴ and yet she is lauded as a goddess (*devī*) in her own right. The adorning of the Sāṃkhya framework with extra layers of symbolic complexity, which is exemplified well in Kashmiri Śaivism but has also occurred in other Tantric systems, tends to result in a heightening of emotional evocativeness combined with a dilution and clouding of philosophical distinctions.

⁵¹ David White takes this view (1996: 20) and quotes Jean Filliozat’s remark that “the Samkhyan concepts, like those of Āyurveda, are part and parcel of the intellectual baggage common to all Indian thinkers.”

⁵² Abhinavagupta, *Parātrīśikālaghuvṛtti*, comment on verse 1 (Muller-Ortega 1989: 87, 253 n.19).

⁵³ Ibid., comment on verse 9 (Muller-Ortega 1989: 88, 254 n.21).

⁵⁴ Ibid., comment on verse 1 (Muller-Ortega 1989: 87, 253 n.19).

The overlaying of Sāṃkhya's metaphysical categories with additional symbolic motifs is echoed in the ways in which Yoga, as a practical soteriological discipline, is treated within Tantric traditions. The well-known eightfold (*aṣṭāṅga*) system outlined in the second and third chapters of the *Yogasūtra* is often discernible as an implicit foundation, but in the Tantric material far more emphasis tends to be placed upon the application of mantras and visualisations as methods of meditation. To some extent, such methods are anticipated in the *Yogasūtra*'s third chapter (esp. 3.29–34), in which the effects of sustained meditation upon certain quasi-physiological energy centres (*cakras*) and channels (*nāḍīs*) are briefly mentioned as part of a varied assortment of meditation techniques. But in the Tantric literature can be found suggested visualisations of diagrammatic emblems (*yantras*) and pictorial scenes that involve such rich and intricate complexity and close attention to detail that the pithy half-sentences of the *Yogasūtra* appear arid by comparison.⁵⁵ Much of the Tantric material gives a particularly strong emphasis to the role of “vital energy” or “vital breath” (*prāṇa*, *vāyu*) as the mechanism of psychophysical transformation, the proposed methodology being to accumulate the vital energy within the central “channel” (*suṣumnā-nāḍī*) in order to thereby thermically stimulate and awaken the still more potent source represented as a coiled female serpent in the “root” energy centre (*mūlādhāra-cakra*). The specific methods for arousing the serpent (who is referred to variously as *kuṇḍalī*, *kuṇḍalinī*, *bhujangī*, etc.) include those of *haṭha-yoga* (“forceful yoga”), which primarily concerns the application of strenuous breathing techniques and bodily contractions in order to engender a prolonged, and in certain cases indefinite, suspension of breathing, known as *kevala-kumbhaka* (“absolute retention”) or *prāṇāyāma* (“extended retention of *prāṇa*”).⁵⁶ *Prāṇāyāma* is a key component of the classical *aṣṭāṅga* system (*YS* 2.49–53), and thus there is no obvious incompatibility between Yoga in its classical and its Tantric versions at a practical level. The differences consist largely in the ways that the goal of the practice is conceived and represented: the classical formulation being to eradicate mental states and processes in order that consciousness or “the seer” (*draṣṭṛ*) can “abide in its own nature” (*svarūpe 'vasthānam*) (*YS* 1.2–3), whereas, in *haṭha-yoga*, as in Tantra more generally, the goal is represented as a trans-personal union of the feminine and masculine poles within the crucible of the human organism.

⁵⁵ See e.g. *Śivasamhitā* 2.1–4: “Within the body mount Meru is surrounded by seven islands; there are rivers, seas, mountains, fields, and also guardians of the fields,” etc. (amended version of Vasu's translation; cf. Vasu 1996: 16).

⁵⁶ “While the vital breath (*prāṇa*) remains in the body, death is vanquished. The full containment of the air (*vāyu*) is *kevala-kumbhaka*” (*Gheraṇḍasamhitā* 5.89, my trans.; cf. Vasu 1976: 113; the same verse appears as 5.84 in Digambarji and Gharote 1997: 140). Cf. *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* 2.71 ff. (Iyengar 1974: 35–36).

Present-day teachers of Yoga, both in the Indian subcontinent and elsewhere, tend not to distinguish sharply between the classical and Tantric teachings, combining both of them in their pedagogical approach, and also, of course, drawing upon a variety of other sources, such as the Upaniṣads, *Bhagavadgītā*, and Purāṇas, etc. It is likely that this tendency has become more prevalent since the establishment of printing presses facilitated easier access to a number of ancient texts, and that previous generations of teachers may have relied more heavily upon the teachings particular to their own lineage. But there are strong indications that a blurring of the philosophical uniqueness of Sāṃkhya and Yoga has been underway for several centuries; and the assimilation of the classical teachings into a hotchpotch of Tantric, Vedāntic, and devotional elements is merely one manifestation of this process. The same process is evidenced in the attempts of later commentaries on the *Yogasūtra*, such as those by Vijñānabhikṣu, Bhāvāgaṇeśa and Nāgeśabhaṭṭa, to reconstruct Sāṃkhya and Yoga in ways that make them compatible with a monistic interpretation of Vedānta.

Subsequent to the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* there have been certain other texts that have endeavoured to encapsulate the salient doctrines of Sāṃkhya without being mere duplicates of, or commentaries upon, the work of Īśvarakṛṣṇa. Most notable among these are the *Tattvasamāśasūtra* and the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* (sometimes referred to as the *Sāṃkhyapravacanasūtra*). Although anonymous, both works have attracted followers who have declared them to be the authentic words of Kapila; and, consequently, minor sub-traditions have flowed from them. Owing largely to the absence of any reference to either work in accounts of Sāṃkhya philosophy up to and including Mādhava's treatment in the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* (fourteenth century CE), they are generally considered to be later than the mid-fourteenth century. This theory is supported by the fact that commentaries upon the two works do not start to appear until the late fourteenth century (in the case of the *Tattvasamāśasūtra*) and the second half of the fifteenth century (in the case of the *Sāṃkhyasūtra*).

The *Tattvasamāśasūtra* is a slender composition, comprising a mere twenty-five sūtras, the last of which was probably added by the unknown author of the commentary known as the *Kramadīpikā* (ca. late fourteenth century). The sūtras are extremely short, most of them consisting of just two or three words, and amount to little more than subheadings, the implications of which are left for commentators to fill in. As expanded and interpreted by the *Kramadīpikā*, and also by later commentaries such as the *Tattvayāthārthyadīpana* of Bhāvāgaṇeśa (ca. late sixteenth century), the *Tattvasamāśasūtra* offers nothing that significantly differentiates its version of Sāṃkhya from that of Īśvarakṛṣṇa.

The *Sāṃkhyasūtra* is a work of far greater length than the *Tattvasamāśasūtra*, and of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* as well. It comprises a total of 527 sūtras divided into six chapters, and much of its content is of considerable philosophical interest. The earliest manuscript of the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* also contains a commentary (*vṛtti*) by Aniruddha, which Garbe (1888) has plausibly assigned to the late fifteenth century. The other well-known commentary on the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* is Vijñānabhikṣu's *Sāṃkhyapravācanasūtrabhāṣya* (ca. 1550–1600 CE), which, in common with its author's other works, tends to impose a form of monistic Vedānta onto the material that is ostensibly being commented upon, and this tendency makes it hermeneutically unreliable although not necessarily philosophically insignificant. There are, however, signs in the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* itself that its author was keen to demonstrate Sāṃkhya's essential conformity with key utterances from the Upaniṣads. Crucially, for example, the Upaniṣadic declarations of the oneness of the self—which would appear to contradict the Sāṃkhya doctrine of a multiplicity of selves—are interpreted to mean that the multiple selves share a common nature (*jāti*), and to that extent are “nondual” (*advaita*) (SS 1.154). Although such attempts to harmonise the respective pronouncements of Sāṃkhya and Vedānta are not an entirely novel development, they are carried out here more explicitly than in previous instances. As has been noted earlier in this chapter, many of the preclassical versions of Sāṃkhya and Yoga tended to include concepts and phrases that later became more exclusive to the Vedāntic schools, but this tendency was probably due to a high degree of conceptual and terminological fluidity, rather than to the kind of self-conscious synthesising of ideas that is exhibited in the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* and its commentaries. This apparent desire to show Sāṃkhya's (and Yoga's) compatibility with *śruti*, i.e. with the “heard” or “revealed” teachings of the Brāhmaṇic and Upaniṣadic tradition, is absent, on the whole, in the classical texts and in the *Tattvasamāśasūtra*. It is likely that such a desire arose due to the religious and philosophical hegemony of Vedāntic schools, and especially (from around the eighth century onwards) of the Advaita Vedānta associated with Śaṅkarācārya.

It is, perhaps, partly because of the apologetic (and hence reactive) character of certain portions of the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* that it has failed to supplant the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* as the principal exposition of Sāṃkhya philosophy, although this may also be due to the greater concision of Īśvarakṛṣṇa's composition, as well as to the obvious spuriousness of the claims made concerning the *Sāṃkhyasūtra*'s authorship. Whatever the reasons may be, however, it remains the case that, in most modern-day presentations and discussions of Sāṃkhya, it is the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* that is treated as primary, with the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* being drawn upon, if at all, only in a secondary capacity.

Before completing this section I should mention that, in addition to Aniruddha's *vṛtti* and Vijñānabhikṣu's *bhāṣya*, the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* has also attracted commentaries from Mahādeva-vedāntin (*Vṛttisāra*, ca. 1650–1700 CE), and Nāgeśabhaṭṭa (*Sāṃkhyasūtravṛtti*, ca. 1700–1750 CE), and that further commentaries upon the three main Sāṃkhya works (i.e. the *Kārikā*, *Tattvasamāśasūtra*, and *Sāṃkhyasūtra*), along with occasional original expositions of the Sāṃkhya teachings, have continued to be written up to the present day.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Such works are too numerous to mention here. A fairly comprehensive list of all known Sāṃkhya texts is given in *EIP* IV: 14–18. It is worth remarking that a significant proportion of the commentaries composed since the beginning of the twentieth century have been subcommentaries upon, or attempts to paraphrase, Vācaspati's *TK*.

The Relation between the Two Darśanas

THE MODEL of the development of Sāṃkhya and Yoga that was largely adhered to in the previous chapter—and which I have called the gestation or ontogenic model—has become widely accepted by scholars, though often, perhaps, merely tacitly due to the absence of anything more satisfactory. The model radically contravenes the view of the systems' origins which is held within the traditions themselves. According to this traditional account the Sāṃkhya teachings (of which Pātañjala-yoga is merely a restatement with a more practical emphasis) were born in the mind of an ancient sage named Kapila, who subsequently dictated them to his disciple Āsuri, from whom a strict pedagogical lineage developed. The last few verses of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* testify to this origination story, with Īśvarakṛṣṇa himself being portrayed, not as an innovator and devisor of new ideas, but as a faithful transmitter of an already existing body of knowledge. The ontogenic model obliterates this origination story by presenting the formation of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, not as the result of a great sage's revelatory intuition, but as a gradual process in which the relevant doctrines begin as vague and often mythologically encumbered notions that, over a period of several hundreds of years, acquire increased clarity and philosophical sharpness. If Kapila has any place at all in this latter version of events, then it is as someone who—at some unspecified point in the “clarification” process—brought a number of doctrines together in an early attempt to form a coherent system.

Despite the high level of acceptance that it has received, there is a serious problem with the ontogenic model outlined above and in the previous chapter. This problem consists in the fact that what the model requires us to believe is that a complex and relatively coherent system of soteriological philosophy could emerge as the consequence of a series of more or less haphazard events in the minds of an indefinite number of protagonists over the course of several dozen generations. That such a thing could occur is perhaps not beyond the realms of possibility, but it is not only highly improbable, it is also entirely at odds with what ordinarily occurs in the development of a philosophical system. Martin Heidegger noted, with regard to ancient Greek philosophy, that “what is great can only begin great”, and that something small and primitive in its origins can only serve to diminish philosophical thinking rather than to enhance it in any way (1961: 15). This need not, and ought not, I think, be taken to mean that a

great philosophy must be brought into the world already *fully fashioned* in every regard, and immune to criticism. But there must be a coherent thought behind it; something of an inspirational quality. Schopenhauer (1966 1: xii f.) drew a distinction between philosophies that comprise a *system of thought* and those, like his own, that consist in a *single thought*. The former, he held, must always possess an architectonic structure, supported by firm foundations, while the latter tend to be more “organic” in nature, in the sense that their parts are mutually supportive. Both kinds of philosophies can be great; for, although Schopenhauer conceived of his entire philosophical output as giving expression to a single thought (a conception which is, of course, highly questionable), he at the same time considered it to be in large measure a response to the work of Kant, who was the architectonic philosopher *par excellence* (ibid: xv). In any event, the point here is that, whether a philosophy is “architectonic” or “organic”—or (as I suspect is most often the case) a combination of these two ideals—it must have a certain *unity* or *integrity*; and it is hard to see how such integrity could be present in a set of disparate notions that have somehow, inexplicably, congealed together.

My task in this chapter is not primarily to overturn the ontogenic model that I have just brought into question, for to do so convincingly would require far more attention to historical details than could possibly be given within the scope of this study. My main task is to justify my decision to speak about Sāṃkhya *and* Yoga, and occasionally about “Sāṃkhya–Yoga”, rather than treating these two as completely autonomous philosophies. Such a justification will involve outlining a number of more-or-less speculative proposals concerning the historical relationship of these two darśanas, and to that extent it will warrant some further discussion of their origin (or origins) and development. But, because the default assumption regarding the relation between classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga is still, on the whole, that the two darśanas are intimately complementary, my task is in large part merely the negative one of fending off the assertions of those who deny this intimate complementarity. These assertions have traditionally focused upon the place of Īśvara in the two systems; or, to be more precise, upon his presence in the *Yogasūtra* and apparent absence in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, which has led to Patañjali’s Yoga being popularly dubbed *seśvara* Sāṃkhya—that is, “Sāṃkhya with (*sa*) Īśvara”—in contrast with Īśvarakṛṣṇa’s so-called *nirīśvara* Sāṃkhya (“Sāṃkhya without Īśvara”). Additionally, from the time that classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga began to receive scholarly attention in the first half of the nineteenth century, they have also tended to be distinguished on methodological grounds; which is to say that, although the two systems are admitted to share the same goal of “aloneness” (*kaivalya*), they are held to expound alternative means of achieving that goal, Sāṃkhya being more rationally oriented in contrast with Yoga’s

mystical or supra-rational approach. Those who adopt this position regarding the respective methodologies of Sāṃkhya and Yoga rarely go so far as to suggest that the difference has given rise to important metaphysical variations. Georg Feuerstein, however, is an exception to this rule; or, at least, has portrayed himself as such an exception by championing the right of classical Yoga to be seen as “an autonomous *darśana* with its own characteristic set of concepts and technical expressions”, which “cannot be subsumed under the heading of Sāṃkhya” (1980: ix–x). Although I do not regard Feuerstein’s case as particularly strong, and it has not, as far as I can tell, won many supporters, it does at least bring together a number of points that need to be refuted if my treatment of Sāṃkhya and Yoga is to remain valid. I shall therefore devote a large part of the present chapter to such a refutation, in the course of which I shall include a number of remarks that clarify my own position regarding the relation between the two darśanas, and which hint towards the intrinsicality of the relation between the metaphysical schema of Sāṃkhya and the introspective methodology of Yoga, which is a theme that will be further explored in later chapters (esp. Chapter 6).

THE HISTORICAL RELATION

Not all researchers that have looked at the history of Sāṃkhya and Yoga have been enticed by the ontogenic model. Richard Garbe, for example, did not accept it, and neither did he accept the traditional account of a unified and faithful lineage of transmission. He held, rather, that the Sāṃkhya system must owe its origin to the genius of a single mind, in which it was formulated prior to its incorporation into several Upaniṣads and portions of the epic and Paurāṇic literature (Garbe 1917: 54–59), but that the ways in which it was so incorporated involved a large measure of “contamination” by popular ideas that were foreign to the original Sāṃkhya.¹ Underlying Garbe’s viewpoint is his thesis that Sāṃkhya represents a non-Vedic, or non-Brāhmaṇic, current within Indian thought, and that it has undergone various attempts to assimilate it into the mainstream religious culture (1917: 5 f.). By calling it “non-Brāhmaṇic”, what is meant is that Sāṃkhya was not a product or an expression of the dominant religious order, in which salvific power lay in the hands of the priestly elite whose members were entitled to perform ritual ceremonies. Although the weakness of Garbe’s arguments in support of this thesis has been persuasively demonstrated by Keith (1949: 58–59), who favours a version of the evolutionary story of Sāṃkhya’s development, I think there is good reason for us to pause before dismissing the “extra-Brāhmaṇic” proposal completely. Garbe’s mistake, in my view, is to attribute the unorthodox character of Sāṃkhya to the influence of the *kṣatriya*

¹ Garbe’s position is neatly, and fairly, summarised by Keith (1949: 53).

varṇa, i.e. the Indian social group responsible for governing and militarily defending geopolitical domains (see Keith 1949: 58). In none of the contexts in which the term *sāṃkhya* is used does such an influence seem likely. Sāṃkhya is, on the contrary, invariably associated—as, in most instances, is Yoga—with renunciation of possessions and status, and the pursuit of transformative insight through quietist contemplation. Such an approach to life does not fit easily either with the Brāhmaṇic emphasis upon ritual sacrifice (designed to increase personal merit and good fortune but not to engender permanent liberation from experiential existence) or with the this-worldly activities and aspirations of kṣatriyas. If, however, we are to regard the asceticism represented by Sāṃkhya and Yoga as non-Brāhmaṇic, then there is a sense in which the entire Upaniṣadic tradition is equally non-Brāhmaṇic, since the ideal of the sagely renunciant absorbed in profound contemplation, beyond worldly attachment and identification, is an image that pervades all the Upaniṣads, not merely those explicitly or implicitly linked with Sāṃkhya and Yoga.

Neither wishing to get too deeply embroiled in a discussion of ancient Indian history in general, nor to present too crude and simplistic an account, I think I can safely note that the line of religious and cultural development from the Vedic Saṃhitās (or collections of invocatory verses) to the systematised philosophies of India is not, in fact, a line at all, but something analogous to an immense banyan tree with “new branches and roots forever springing up or down as others wither away” (Lipner 1994: 5).² Among these branches and roots—and possibly forming the main trunk itself—are a number of traditions of ritual worship, whose practices are formalised in the Brāhmaṇa texts that were appended to the Vedic Saṃhitās, and which have commonly been taken to stand for “*the* Brāhmaṇic tradition”. Interwoven with this tradition, or set of traditions, are various minor traditions and pedagogical lineages, often linked to founding preceptors, that tend to be oriented less toward ritual activity and more toward ascetic and introvertive discipline. These ascetic traditions find their voice in the Āraṇyakas, and even more so in the Upaniṣads, which have also been appended to the Vedic Saṃhitās, thereby establishing the fourfold division of the so-called “heard wisdom” (*śruti*) into Saṃhitā (or Mantra), Brāhmaṇa, Āraṇyaka, and Upaniṣad.³

It is, in my view, with the ascetic traditions in general that Sāṃkhya and Yoga can most plausibly be held to have had their origins, neither as pre-Vedic nor as reactions to Brāhmaṇic hegemony, but as lineages that began with a particular individual, and then followed a line of

² Lipner uses this analogy to characterise Hinduism in general, and not merely its classical and preclassical manifestations; but it is, of course, equally applicable in both cases.

³ The presence of significantly overlapping and disputed portions of the latter three categories of *śruti* obliges us to regard the fourfold division as merely approximate, rather than as an exact representation of the textual reality.

descent from teacher (*guru*) to disciple (*śiṣya*). Over time, because one teacher can have several disciples, a number of lineages would tend to develop; and in the absence of written texts, it is inevitable that interpretive variations would slip into the teachings transmitted along these divergent lineages. Similar to Garbe, I consider it likely that the examples of Sāṃkhya and Yoga doctrines found in the Upaniṣads, *Mahābhārata*, Purāṇas, and elsewhere are the result of those doctrines' having been borrowed or assimilated from already existing schools or minor traditions. The alternative view, which, though rarely explicitly articulated, implies that the systems of Sāṃkhya and Yoga somehow, mysteriously, evolved out of disparate fragments gleaned from the various available textual sources, is founded upon a misunderstanding of how philosophical systems originate in general and of the traditional process of doctrinal transmission in India in particular.

Before moving on to discuss a selection of views of the relation between Sāṃkhya and Yoga, it is worth mentioning an interesting variation on the "evolutionary" story of their development. This is the proposal, put forward at the end of the nineteenth century by Paul Deussen, that Sāṃkhya and Yoga did indeed come together through a process of gradual metamorphosis of Upaniṣadic thought, but that, far from constituting a progressive integration of a number of disparate strands, this process in fact amounted to a "natural disintegration" of an originally superior philosophy (1919: 245; cf. 235 ff.). According to this proposal, the earliest Upaniṣads—namely the ancient prose works such as the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Chāndogya*—are inspired by an exalted monistic idealism, which, in the subsequent metrical and later prose Upaniṣads, can be seen to descend, via pantheism and cosmogonism,⁴ to theism and eventually to atheism; this last being, on Deussen's view, embodied in the Sāṃkhya system. The final destination in this abysmal decline is a form of deism, which Deussen attributes to Yoga. It differs from the "atheistic" Sāṃkhya only in the respect that, "from considerations of practical convenience", it appends to that system a personal, yet essentially inactive, deity (1919: 238–39).⁵ Deussen's approach is useful insofar as it draws attention to the variety of metaphysical viewpoints that can be detected within the Upaniṣads, but his division of these viewpoints into a linear schema comprising several discrete stages is over-simplistic, and presupposes a level of certainty pertaining to Upaniṣadic chronology that neither he nor any subsequent researcher has been capable of validating. Far worse than this, however, is his

⁴ Cosmogonism being the view that the "self" (*ātman*) produces the universe from out of itself and then "enters into it as soul" (Deussen 1919: 238).

⁵ Deussen presumably regarded the distinction between deism and theism in similar terms to Kant, who notes that "the deist represents this being [i.e. God] merely as a *cause of the world* (whether by the necessity of its nature or through freedom, remains undecided), the theist as the *Author of the world* [who can be conceived as 'a supreme intelligence']" (CPuR A631–2/B659–60; original emphasis, my square brackets).

characterisation of Sāṃkhya and Yoga as forms of “atheism” and “deism” respectively. Such terms, being derived from distinctively Western theological discourse, can be highly misleading when applied to ancient Indian systems, unless they are very heavily qualified indeed. Deussen is perhaps unique in his attribution of “deism” to Yoga, but “atheism” and “theism” continue to be bandied around even in relatively recent works on Sāṃkhya and Yoga, as though it were self-evident what these terms mean in an Indian context.⁶ I shall, however, leave further discussion of this matter until I come to deal with the whole question of the imputed “atheism” of classical Sāṃkhya later in this chapter, and shall turn now to a broad categorisation of the alternative conceptions of the relation between Sāṃkhya and Yoga.

Theories (or, in some cases, pre-theoretical assumptions) regarding this relation can be placed into four main categories, which I shall call, respectively, (a) the *single system* view, (b) the *divergence* view, (c) the *grafting-on* view, and (d) the *separate systems* view.

(a) According to the “single system” view, Sāṃkhya and Yoga have, from their beginnings, constituted not two distinct systems but, rather, two complementary expressions of an essentially unified enterprise. The classical versions of these darśanas can, therefore, be regarded as two halves (or aspects, poles, etc.) of the same system: one half (namely, Sāṃkhya) gives primary emphasis to theoretical matters, and the other (namely, Yoga) is principally practical in orientation, but both are harmonised within the compass of a theory-practice unity, which is directed towards the common soteriological goal of *kaivalya*. Chakravarti exemplifies this position when, speaking of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, he states that “The former is specially busy with the theoretical investigation, whereas the latter deals with the practical side. Speaking briefly, the two systems are nothing but the concave and convex side of the same sphere” (1975: 65).⁷ Proponents of this view are apt to use the conjunct expression “Sāṃkhya–Yoga” not merely as a shorthand for “Sāṃkhya and Yoga”, but to designate a single system (or

⁶ The following is a selection of examples: “The main difference between the Sāṃkhya and Yoga, as is generally known, lies in the fact that the former is regarded as atheistic while the latter is known to be theistic” (Chakravarti 1975: 65); “The atheism of Classical Sāṃkhya and the curious theism of Classical Yoga must be understood as deviations from a strongly theistic base, reflected in the *Upanishads*” (Feuerstein 1998: 265); “The atheism of the Sāṃkhya is one of its outstanding features” (Suryanarayana Sastri 1948: xvi); “as a system Sāṃkhya is atheistic” (Keith 1949: 13 fn.1); “Since Sāṃkhyans are atheists, it is not God whose existence they are trying to prove but rather *puruṣa* and unmanifest *prakṛti*” (Lusthaus 1998: 465). Larson has provided a more thoughtful discussion of the issue, in which he characterises the classical Sāṃkhya view of “the problem of salvation” as “non-theistic” rather than “atheistic” (1979: 125–26).

⁷ Cf. Zimmer (1953: 280): “These two are regarded in India as twins, the two aspects of a single discipline. Sāṃkhya provides a basic theoretical exposition of human nature, enumerating and defining its elements, analyzing their manner of co-operation in the state of bondage (*bandha*), and describing their state of disentanglement or separation in release (*mokṣa*), while Yoga treats specifically of the dynamics of the process of disentanglement, and outlines practical techniques for the gaining of release, or ‘isolation’ (*kaivalya*).”

“sphere”, in Chakravarti’s metaphor) that combines these two aspects.⁸ It is a common feature of this view, or perhaps a sub-variety of it, that Sāṃkhya is seen as the more comprehensive side of the partnership, and that Yoga is merely a compartment or “school” to be referred to as “Pātañjala-Sāṃkhya” (see e.g. Dasgupta 1922: 229).⁹ In support of this view it is sometimes noted that the most important commentators upon the *Yogasūtra* have been unanimous in regarding Yoga as an “exposition” (*pravacana*) of Sāṃkhya, and that the very expressions “Patañjali’s exposition of Sāṃkhya” (*pātañjala sāmkhya-pravacana*) and “Yoga doctrine” (*yoga-śāstra*) appear next to one another in the colophons traditionally inserted at the end of each chapter of Vyāsa’s *Bhāṣya* (cf. Chakravarti 1975: 73).

The “single system” view that I have just outlined is often asserted in terms that are sufficiently vague to leave the precise nature of the relation between *classical* Sāṃkhya and Yoga undisclosed. When Sāṃkhya and Yoga are said to be “twins”, or aspects of the same “sphere”, it is rarely, if ever, implied that the Yoga of *Patañjali* and the Sāṃkhya of *Īśvarakṛṣṇa* perfectly reflect one another. Rather, what is meant—I presume—is that Yoga (of which Patañjali’s is the principal version) shares enough in common with expositions of Sāṃkhya (of which *Īśvarakṛṣṇa*’s is the most coherent) for the classical forms of Sāṃkhya and Yoga to be regarded as complementary and not antagonistic. The presence of such vagueness blurs the distinction somewhat between the “single system” view and that which I shall now come to, namely the “divergence” view.

(b) The “divergence view” conceives of classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga as being derived from a single system but as having diverged from one another at some point along a more or less complicated sequence of transmissions, which “sequence” is perhaps better pictured as a bush with multiple branches than as a chain of orderly links. On this view, then, the two classical systems are related to one another more as cousins than as twins. This is the view that I take, and I suspect that it approximates by far the most common understanding of the historical relation between classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and that this fact has tended to be obscured by the confusing smokescreen of the ontogenic model. Dasgupta subscribes to it in his *Yoga Philosophy in Relation to Other Systems of Indian Thought*, where he supposes that “we have lost the original Sāṃkhya texts, whereas the systems that pass now by the name[s] of Sāṃkhya and Yoga represent two schools of philosophy which evolved through the modifications of the original Sāṃkhya school” (1930: 2). There may not have been any “original Sāṃkhya texts”,

⁸ Sen Gupta, for example, speaks of “Sāṃkhya–Yoga philosophy” in the singular (1982: ix, and *passim*), and Dasgupta refers to “the Sāṃkhya–Yoga system” (1922: 222).

⁹ Some scholars (e.g. Frauwallner and Chakravarti) have speculated that “Pātañjala-Sāṃkhya” might be a continuation of the school associated with Vārṣaganya and Vindhyavāsin (see *EIP* iv: 12–13), but such speculations are of only tenuous relevance to our present topic.

or, at least, not written ones; the teachings may have been passed on orally, which would have facilitated relatively easy modification along different lineages. And thus, when they come to be written down by scribes within those different lineages, it is hardly surprising that variant forms are produced.

One point, which is often taken for granted but needs to be stated explicitly, is that the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and the *Yogasūtra* are clearly composed for *different purposes*. Both of them comprise a number of proclamations presented in condensed formats that are relatively amenable to memorisation; and both, it is fair to assume, are intended primarily for the instruction of initiated disciples by their more learned and experienced mentors. However, while the *Kārikā* is primarily an exposition of the theoretical principles underlying soteriological practice, the *Yogasūtra* is to a far greater extent a guide to the practice itself. This significant disreputation of emphasis needs to be born in mind whenever claims are made concerning apparent philosophical discrepancies of the classical darśanas. I shall return to this particular issue of emphasis later, when discussing the respective methodologies of Sāṃkhya and Yoga; but it is also highly relevant to the third position on the relation between the two darśanas, which is the “grafting on” thesis.

(c) This “grafting on” view can, once again, be found in the work of Dasgupta—which fact in itself is suggestive of the apparent ease with which certain scholars are able to slide from one position to another—although it has been around at least since Garbe’s time. In common with the first two views, it asserts that classical Sāṃkhya is an exposition of a much older body of teachings; but unlike those views, it holds that classical Yoga is a far more artificial construction, amounting essentially to a collection of technical instructions plus a few ad hoc doctrines that have been attached, or “grafted on”, to some already existing (presumably pre-classical) version of the Sāṃkhya darśana. Garbe makes the point as follows:

The metaphysical basis of the Yoga system is Sāṃkhya philosophy, whose doctrines Patañjali so completely incorporated into his system that that philosophy is with justice uniformly regarded in Indian literature as a branch of the Sāṃkhya. At bottom, all that Patañjali did was to embellish the Sāṃkhya system with the Yoga practice, the mysterious powers, and the personal god; his chief aim had, no doubt, been to render this system acceptable to his fellow-countrymen by the eradication of its atheism. (1899: 14–15)

The latter remark concerning Patañjali’s primary motivation displays an astonishing naivety, which has nevertheless been repeated by subsequent scholars.¹⁰ The idea that the “chief aim” of the *Yogasūtra*’s compiler was to achieve popular acceptability for the Sāṃkhya philosophy

¹⁰ Macdonell, for example, asserts that, “In order to make his system more acceptable, Patanjali introduced into it the doctrine of a personal god, but in so loose a way as not to affect the system as a whole” (1900: 396–97).

is, frankly, preposterous. Leaving this aside, however, the extract exhibits two metaphorical descriptions of the relation between Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the first being that the former system is “incorporated into” the latter, and the second being that Yoga amounts merely to an “embellish[ment]” of Sāṃkhya (though, as usual, we are left uncertain whether it is classical Sāṃkhya or some broader category that is being referred to). Both metaphors evoke a kind of parasitic relationship, with the founder of Yoga making use of Sāṃkhya to suit his own purposes. The “grafting” metaphor that I have used to characterise this position as a whole derives from Dasgupta, who says of Patañjali that he “not only collected the different forms of Yoga practices, and gleaned the diverse ideas which were or could be associated with the Yoga, but grafted them all on the Sāṃkhya metaphysics” (1922: 229). The major problem with this thesis is that it fundamentally misconstrues the relation between the metaphysical principles on the one hand and the contemplative discipline on the other. It assumes that these two components—which are, in my view, critical elements of both Sāṃkhya and Yoga—can come into being and be intelligibly discussed independently of one another, when in fact they are mutually reflexive and reinforcing. It relies on an exaggerated emphasis on the use of rational arguments in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* in order to claim that the metaphysical schema that is at the heart of both Sāṃkhya and Yoga can be arrived at separately from sustained non-ratiocinative meditation. This attribution of distinct methodologies to the two systems (“rationalism” in the case of Sāṃkhya and “contemplation” in that of Yoga) is a distortion that continues to infect studies of them up to the present day,¹¹ and, as already noted, I shall be returning to it below.

(d) To complete this fourfold classification, I need to mention the thesis that Sāṃkhya and Yoga began as separate systems and remain so in their classical forms. No one would deny that the two systems share a great deal in common, and thus it is at least questionable whether they can genuinely and consistently be regarded as entirely separate. For most scholars the relevant question is not *whether* Sāṃkhya and Yoga are related, but *how*, or *in what ways*, this relation manifests. However, in Feuerstein’s case—although by no means consistently throughout his works—there appears to be an almost missionary zeal to distinguish classical Yoga from Sāṃkhya and to declare that the divergent methodologies of the two systems (which divergence was, presumably, on this view, present from their individual inceptions) has “initiated important conceptual and doctrinal divergencies which further increased the chasm between both schools of thought” (1980: 116). I shall now discuss in some detail the

¹¹ Whicher, for example, contrasts classical Sāṃkhya’s stress on “theoretical/intellectual analysis” with classical Yoga’s emphasis on “the necessity of personal experimentation and practical meditational techniques” (1998a: 53).

piece of Feuerstein's work that is most relevant here, inserting, where appropriate, more general remarks that relate back to previous passages in the present chapter.

FEUERSTEIN'S VIEW OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CLASSICAL SĀṂKHYA AND YOGA

The piece in which Feuerstein most vigorously pushes his assertion of the wide gap between classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga appears as the seventh chapter in his short book, *The Philosophy of Classical Yoga*, the author having made it clear at the very outset of the book that he holds the "single most important finding" of his research to be "the fact that Patañjali's system cannot be subsumed under the heading of Sāṃkhya", that "Classical Yoga is exactly what its protagonists claim: an autonomous *darśana* with its own characteristic set of concepts and technical expressions", and that the "popular scholarly impression according to which Classical Yoga is some kind of parasite, capitalising on the philosophical efforts of Classical Sāṃkhya, is [...] in need of urgent and radical revision" (pp. ix–x).¹² It is not at all clear, however, who Feuerstein has in mind when he refers to the "protagonists" of classical Yoga. It is certainly not the authors of the traditional commentaries on the *Yogasūtra*, for these invariably and liberally draw upon Sāṃkhya sources in order to explain the sūtras and generally stress, not Yoga's autonomous status, but its continuity with Sāṃkhya (though, admittedly, not necessarily *classical* Sāṃkhya). Indeed, one of the things Feuerstein is particularly keen to do is "combat the overpowering influence exercised by Vyāsa's scholium" (p. ix), for the very reason that he considers Vyāsa to have "superimposed the views of his particular school on the philosophy of Patañjali," rather than having provided a neutral, and thus more trustworthy, exegesis (p. 51). Since the other major commentaries either take Vyāsa's bhāṣya as their starting-point or impose an equally biased interpretation of their own upon the sūtras, it is doubtful whether any protagonists of classical Yoga fit Feuerstein's description. Even Patañjali himself—or whoever is responsible for compiling the *Yogasūtra*—nowhere explicitly declares the "autonomy" of Yoga.

In any case, notwithstanding the dearth of enthusiasm for his viewpoint from traditional sources, Feuerstein holds that he has identified "three areas of contrast between Classical

¹² More recent writings by Feuerstein indicate that his views have not significantly changed since the first publication, in 1980, of the work discussed here. These views are, however, often hard to pin down due to the presence of ambiguities in his remarks. For example, the statement (2001: xii) that "It is seldom understood that Patañjali made his own unique contribution to metaphysics and did not merely adopt wholesale the principles of Sāṃkhya, as we know it from the *Sāṃkhya-Kārikā*" could be taken to mean, among other things, that Patañjali did not adopt *any* of the Sāṃkhya principles, or that he adopted *all* of them and then added his own modifications. It is likely, of course, that Feuerstein means that Patañjali adopted *some* but not all such principles, but the "merely" confuses the issue.

Sāṃkhya and Pātañjala-Yoga,” these being: (1) methodology, (2) doctrinal framework, and (3) terminology. Of these, he considers the first to be largely responsible for the other two (p. 112). It is therefore central to Feuerstein’s argument that he should be able to provide convincing evidence that the methodologies of Sāṃkhya and Yoga differ significantly from one another.

Methodology

Feuerstein begins by asserting that, “whereas Classical Sāṃkhya relies heavily on the power of ratiocination and discernment, Classical Yoga, like any other yogic tradition, is founded on a philosophy which encourages personal experimentation and direct ‘mystical’ verification” (p. 113). As has been noted already, he is not at all unique in making this assertion. Indeed, assertions to similar effect have become platitudinous in studies of the two systems. Van Buitenen has pointed the finger of culpability at Garbe for initiating, or at least consolidating, the characterisation of Sāṃkhya as “a rational system” (van Buitenen 1957a: 15). Garbe subtitled his major work on Sāṃkhya “a system of Indian rationalism”,¹³ and, in another monograph, stated that, of all Indian philosophies, Sāṃkhya “claims our first and chief attention, because it alone attempts to solve its problems solely by the means of reason” (1899: 29).¹⁴

Proponents of this “rationalist” interpretation of Sāṃkhya often encounter an obstinate difficulty when they try to contrast this rational methodology with the approach of Yoga. What they want to say, it seems, is that Sāṃkhya and Yoga can be distinguished from one another on the basis that the former system has been arrived at by purely logical or rational methods while the latter is principally, or perhaps exclusively, the result of direct intuition obtained in altered states of consciousness. The problem is that, in view of the fact that both systems are intended to bring about the same ultimate end, which is expressed as the “aloneness” (*kaivalya*) of the self (*puruṣa*) or consciousness (*dṛśi*) (SK 68; YS 2.25; 3.50, 55; 4.26, 34), it seems highly unlikely—indeed, ridiculous—that they could achieve this by fundamentally different approaches. The problem would not be so serious if the kind of knowledge being sought related merely to some mundane matter of fact, such as whether there is, or is not, a cat outside my window, or how long it takes to walk from my house to the post office, or even what the circumference of the earth is at its equator. There is in each of these cases more than one way of finding out the desired information, some of which will be more valid

¹³ *Die Sāṃkhya-Philosophie: Eine Darstellung des indischen Rationalismus* (Leipzig: Haessel, 1894; 2nd edn 1917).

¹⁴ Davies, however, indicates in several remarks that Garbe’s view was shared by himself, and thus probably by other scholars of the time. He says, for example, of Sāṃkhya that “It is the earliest attempt on record to give an answer, from reason alone, to the mysterious questions which arise in every thoughtful mind about the origin of the world, the nature and relations of man, and his future destiny” (1894: v).

than others, and others of which might be equally valid. In the case of the kind of knowledge whose pursuit is the very *raison d'être* of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, however, its acquisition is said to involve a transcendence of the very cognitive processes by means of which all other knowledge, whether empirical or conceptual, is obtained. So utterly distinct is the resultant state from our ordinary conception of knowledge that a strong case could be made for denying that the term “knowledge” has any applicability to it whatsoever. This issue will be taken up in later chapters (esp. Chapter 7); but for now, the most urgent point to stress is that the goal of Yoga and Sāṃkhya, at least as it is described in the classical texts, is a *non-ratiocinative* (or, if one prefers, *supra-ratiocinative*) state, which cannot possibly be attained by rational means alone.

That the goal of Sāṃkhya appears to be precisely that of Yoga, and thus consists in a cessation of mental activities and not an ongoing process of inferential reasoning, is a stubborn fact that won't go away. Those who wish to maintain that a major difference exists between the two darśanas at the level of methodology therefore generally have to simply ignore this fact when describing Sāṃkhya's “rationalism”. Radhakrishnan, for example, acknowledges in one place that the goal of Sāṃkhya seems to be a passive state, “which no breath of emotion or stir of action disturbs” (1927 II: 314), while earlier in the same chapter asserting, in concord with Garbe, that “Sāṃkhya is a notable attempt in the realm of pure philosophy”, whose very name indicates “the fact that it arrives at its conclusions by means of theoretical investigation” (ibid.: 249).¹⁵ How a state of complete mental passivity (which, Radhakrishnan admits, “seems to be an extinction of individuality” (p. 313)) can be arrived at “by means of theoretical investigation” is not explained. Nor is it explained by Dasgupta, who states that “What the Sāṃkhya tries to achieve through knowledge, Yoga achieves through the perfected discipline of the will and psychological control of the mental states” (1922: 273). This attempt to associate Sāṃkhya and Yoga with “knowledge” and “will” respectively—and to distinguish between them at least partly on this basis—is surprising, and completely fatuous. Both systems are concerned with “knowledge” (*viveka*, *jñāna*, *vijñāna*, *prajñā*) in the sense of cultivating an awareness of the non-identity of puruṣa and prakṛti, and both of them, presumably, involve some directional effort that could be loosely referred to as “will”; it is therefore highly inappropriate to suggest that “knowledge” and “discipline of will” are employed exclusively by either darśana.

¹⁵The same expression—i.e. “The Sāṃkhya is held to be the most notable attempt in the realm of pure philosophy”—is used by Theos Bernard (1989: 84). And compare Davies (1894: v): “The system of Kapila, called Sāṃkhya or Rationalistic, [...] contains nearly all that India has produced in the department of pure philosophy.”

An alternative, but in my view no less illegitimate, way of trying to overcome the stubborn problem mentioned above is to contend that, notwithstanding their *apparent* equivalence, the goals of Sāṃkhya and Yoga are not in fact the same; or, to be more precise, as represented in the classical texts they *are* the same, but followers of the Sāṃkhya approach fall short of the supreme soteriological terminus, which can be reached only by means of Yoga. A pedantic reading of the quotation from Dasgupta in the last paragraph might take its author to be insinuating such a claim: “What Sāṃkhya *tries to achieve* [...] Yoga *achieves*” (1922: 273, emphasis added); but Dasgupta probably did not intend to imply by this that Sāṃkhya offers a less reliable vehicle than does Yoga. Ian Whicher, however, does not merely imply the inadequacy of Sāṃkhya to arrive at the final destination; he states it explicitly: “Yoga, in its program of purification, goes beyond the position of classical Sāṃkhya [...], which seems to rest content with a discriminating knowledge (*viveka*) leading to a final isolation of *puruṣa* or absolute separation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*” (1998a: 288). “[Sāṃkhya’s] conceptual means of discrimination (*vijñāna*) is not sufficient [...] for the aspiring yogin. [...] In Yoga, immortality is realized through consistent practice and self-discipline, and is not something to be demonstrated through inference, analysis, and reasoning” (1998a: 53). It should be mentioned that Whicher’s interpretation of the goal of Yoga is somewhat unusual, for he imagines it to be an embodied state of indefinite duration in which experience and action has been “purified” but not discontinued (1998a: 275 ff.). This interpretation enables him to portray the goal of Sāṃkhya in a way that, on most accounts, would exactly coincide with that of Yoga while maintaining that the latter darśana seeks a loftier destination. Despite the unavoidable consequence of this view being that the “absolute separation” of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (and thus the cessation of all thought) is achievable by some form of ratiocination, Whicher does not dwell upon this point, and thus we are denied an explanation of how thinking can bring about its own demise. (Whicher’s interpretation of the goal of Yoga will receive further attention in Chapter 7 below.)

Returning to Feuerstein’s case, we find that, without wholeheartedly committing himself to the kind of Yogic supremacist position adopted by Whicher, he insinuates the defectiveness of Sāṃkhya by claiming that “adherents of Yoga [...] feel that the reconditioning of the cognitive apparatus as achieved by the method recommended in Classical Sāṃkhya is not conducive to that complete rupture with the phenomenal which alone is capable of securing emancipation” (1980: 115). In his account of what “the method recommended in Classical Sāṃkhya” consists in, Feuerstein picks out two important terms from the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and interprets them in ways that support his overall “rationalistic” characterisation. The two selected terms,

or expressions, are *vijñāna* and *tattva-abhyāsa*, both of which occur only once in the *Kārikā*, at verses 2 and 64 respectively. Feuerstein doesn't say a great deal about either of them; but having defined *vijñāna* as "the careful holding apart of the three essential ontological categories postulated by Sāṃkhya"—namely, (1) manifest prakṛti, (2) unmanifest prakṛti, and (3) puruṣa—he then goes on to say the following about the second of the two expressions:

Tattva-abhyāsa, which is applied *vijñāna*, represents the effort to disrupt the habit of the empirical ego of identifying with the phenomenal contents of consciousness, so as to re-locate man's true identity in the transcendental Self. Man is essentially *puruṣa*, and in order to reach Self-authenticity he must divest himself of all phenomenal accretions, such as mind, body, external property [and] social relations. (1980: 114)

What Feuerstein successfully highlights here is the centrality of self-identity in Sāṃkhya's soteriological project, its methodology being intended to bring about the cessation of false identification. In my view, the elements with which one is to disidentify would be better described as the mental capacities and processes that make phenomenal consciousness possible, rather than as simply "the phenomenal contents of consciousness" or "phenomenal accretions", but, roughly speaking, Feuerstein's description is on the right lines. What remains mystifying, however, is why Feuerstein should assume that, for Sāṃkhya, this "relocation" of one's self-identification (which, it could be argued, ends in an abandonment of the sense of selfhood altogether) is a "rationalistic" process, when the rational mind is evidently one of the "accretions" to be disidentified with and stripped away!¹⁶

While Feuerstein does not overlook the importance of renunciation and non-attachment (*vairāgya*) in Sāṃkhya, even this he tries to associate with an underlying rationalism, stating that, according to *kārikā* 45, "*vijñāna* must be accompanied by an act of renunciation of everything that reason—in keeping with tradition—has revealed to be 'non-self'" (1980: 114). The expression "reason—in keeping with tradition" is somewhat oxymoronic, for, at least in western philosophy, reason has tended to be contrasted with tradition, the latter being considered to impose dogmatic constraints upon the reasoning process. In view of this fact, we might begin to question the sense in which Feuerstein is using terms such as "reason" and "rationalistic". He confidently asserts of *vijñāna* that it "is by no means synonymous with *prajñā* or gnostic insight as acquired in *samādhi*", but is, rather, "an intellectual act of continuously reminding oneself that one is not this body, this particular sensation, feeling or thought." And he adds that "This is the famous *neti-neti* procedure of the upaniṣadic sages

¹⁶ It should, further, be added that the expression *eka-tattva-abhyāsa*—meaning "sustained concentration upon a single 'that-ness'"—occurs at *YS* 1.32. The similarity between this phrase and the *tattva-abhyāsa* of *SK* 64 is indicative, in my view, of the overlap between Sāṃkhya and Yoga practice.

applied in the most rationalistic manner possible” (1980: 115). But the technique being referred to hardly sounds “rationalistic”; on the contrary, as Feuerstein describes it, it appears to involve adopting the very attitude of non-attached witnessing that is a key component of numerous meditative systems, including that of Yoga. It would seem, therefore, that, whereas most people might be inclined to associate “rationalism”, in a very broad sense, with the employment of logical reasoning skills, Feuerstein finds an even broader use for the term, applying it, apparently, to any cognitive act whatsoever. On this basis every stage of Yogic meditation short of *nirbīja-samādhi* would also qualify as “rationalistic”.¹⁷

The fact that the approach to soteriological practice taken by Sāṃkhya involves a transformative element, and does not consist exclusively in the drawing of logical conclusions through a process of reasoning, is tentatively admitted by Feuerstein, who notes that “it is feasible that a perpetual distancing of oneself from the contents of consciousness might sooner or later induce altered states of awareness, nor is it entirely impossible that this was actually intended by Īśvara Kṛṣṇa and his disciples” (1980: 115). What, according to Feuerstein, the Sāṃkhya approach lacks, however, is any way of dealing with the deeply ingrained “habit patterns” or *saṃskāras* (which Feuerstein translates as “subliminal-activators”), for these can be eradicated only by the kind of intensive meditative discipline that results in *samādhi*, and in *asamprajñāta-samādhi* (“*samādhi* without cognitive support”, my trans.) in particular (p. 116). In this connection, Feuerstein states that, “in Yoga, the Sāṃkhya *viññāna* becomes *viveka-khyāti* or the gnostic vision of discernment” (ibid.). The use of “becomes” is ambiguous here: it could be taken to mean that *viññāna* (as used in the *SK*) and *viveka-khyāti* (as used in the *YS*) are synonymous; but since Feuerstein has already asserted that *viññāna* is not to be regarded as “gnostic insight” (p. 115), it would be more consistent with his case to assume that, in Feuerstein’s view, *viveka-khyāti* is a step on from *viññāna*, even though both expressions are normally understood to mean discerning or discriminative knowledge. It is highly likely, however, that the two terms in question are in fact synonyms or near synonyms, for the contexts in which they appear, in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and *Yogasūtra* respectively, indicate that both terms stand for a mental state in which the ontological principles, that in ordinary experience remain conflated in some way, are known to be distinct. In *kārikā* 2, as has been noted above, *viññāna* denotes the discrimination between (or, in Feuerstein’s phrase, “the careful holding apart of”) the manifest (*vyakta*), the unmanifest (*avyakta*), and the “knower” (*jñā*, i.e. *puruṣa*). In the *Yogasūtra*, meanwhile, *viveka-khyāti* is held to be the means of eradicating “misperception” (*avidyā*), and hence “conflation” (*saṃyoga*) (*YS* 2.24–26), and can be understood as the dis-

¹⁷ *Nirbīja-samādhi* is a state of “oneness without seed”, i.e. devoid of any trace of identification with the manifestations of *prakṛti*. It is referred to at *YS* 1.51 and 3.8.

crimination between the “seer” (*draṣṭṛ*, i.e. *puruṣa*) and the “seen” (*dṛśya*, i.e. *prakṛti*, including its unmanifest aspect). This “discriminating vision”, according to sūtra 2.27, eventually gives rise to *prajñā*, a higher form of knowledge or awareness, which, without further explanation, is said to be sevenfold. Although these latter details are not duplicated in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, it is nevertheless evident that for Sāṃkhya, as for Yoga, discriminative knowledge is not itself the final goal but is that which immediately precipitates the achievement of that goal. Towards the end of the *Kārikā*, for example, we read that the pure and unimpeachable knowledge (*jñāna*) attained through *tattva-abhyāsa* (lit. “the assiduous practice of that-ness”) (*SK* 64) results in the cessation of “effusion” (*sarga*), i.e. the manifestation of *prakṛti* (66), and, upon the eventual exhaustion of the subconscious response-patterns (*saṃskāras*), in the “aloneness” of *puruṣa* (68). Such an account of the psychic episodes leading up to the release from empirical reality, however embellished with poetic imagery that account might be, illustrates, in my view, the close similarity between the respective soteriological approaches of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and patently fails to illustrate their “bifurcation [...] into a ‘rationalistic’ and a ‘mystical’ system” (Feuerstein 1980: 113).

The dogged insistence of a considerable number of researchers in this field that Sāṃkhya, notwithstanding the passages that have just been cited, does not seek to transcend rational thought is an extraordinary phenomenon. I can only presume that it derives from a confusion regarding the notion of methodology itself. It may seem like a point too obvious to be worth mentioning, but it perhaps needs to be noted that the methodology employed in *composing a text* that deals with soteriology is one thing, and the methodology recommended in that text for *achieving the posited soteriological end* is quite another thing. In many works of Indian soteriology and philosophy the methodological process by which certain conclusions were reached is not explicitly presented; all one tends to get are the conclusions themselves, occasionally accompanied by illustrative analogies, with reasons and arguments being conspicuous by their absence. This is, on the whole, the case with the *Yogasūtra*: it comprises a series of assertive statements, unsupported by arguments; and, due to the terseness of the sūtra format, even its use of analogies is very restricted.¹⁸ The *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, however, employs both analogies *and*, in a few places, arguments, or at least the rudiments of arguments, to support its claims. Being highly condensed, these arguments tend to require some interpretive unpacking before they can be evaluated; but they are sufficiently lucid to show that a process of reasoning lies behind key Sāṃkhya doctrines such as the *satkārya* view of manifestation (*SK* 9),

¹⁸ Rare examples include the analogy of a farmer irrigating a field, which is merely alluded to at *YS* 4.3, and the use of “field” (*kṣetra*) as a metaphor for *avidyā* (suggesting that the other afflictions grow from it) at 2.4.

the existence of an imperceptible subject of experience (17), and the plurality of empirically engaged selves (18). It is, almost undoubtedly, the presence of these few attempts to reasonably justify its assertions that has earned classical Sāṃkhya its “rationalistic” reputation. Since, however, the *Kārikā* contains no statement to the effect that logical reasoning is to be used as a means of acquiring the discriminating knowledge necessary for the liberation of puruṣa, the only explanation for the ascription of such a position to Sāṃkhya is that certain interpreters have made a profoundly unwarranted leap from *compositional* methodology to *soteriological* methodology. In other words, they have assumed that, because rational thinking has been utilised in the process of composing the philosophical text, the same rational approach must constitute the mainstay of that philosophy’s emancipatory enterprise.

In some instances, support for the “rationalistic” interpretation has been drawn from the etymology of the word *sāṃkhya* itself. The term is generally agreed to derive from *saṃkhyā*, meaning “number”, and to have a primary sense of “relating to number, enumeration, or calculation” (Larson 1987: 3). Although such a derivation fails to account for the term’s being so closely associated with renunciation and asceticism, as it tends to be in both classical and other contexts, it nevertheless remains plausible due to the prevalence of enumerated principles and sets of principles in all systematic formulations of Sāṃkhya. Radhakrishnan quibbles with such an explanation, noting that the “tendency to enumeration is common to all Hindu systems of thought”, and that “In the early texts, ‘Saṃkhyā’ is used in the sense of philosophical reflection and not numerical reckoning” (1927 II: 249). Both of these points are valid, but hardly decisive. With regard to the first, Radhakrishnan need not have restricted his comment to “Hindu systems of thought”, for Buddhism and Jainism also do their fair share of enumerating principles.¹⁹ It is indeed a ubiquitous feature of Indian philosophy per se. But this fact does nothing to invalidate the etymology that has been proposed for *sāṃkhya*. The fact that schools and traditions other than Sāṃkhya employ enumeration has no, or at most very little, bearing upon whether Sāṃkhya acquired its name *because* it employs that method, just as the fact that there are many species of bird that are black does not make it less likely that the blackbird is so-called precisely because it (or, at least, the male of the species) has black feathers. In support of his second point—that earlier texts use *saṃkhyā* to mean philosophical reflection instead of enumeration—Radhakrishnan quotes a verse from the *Mahābhārata* (XII.11.934), which reads: “The weighing of the defects and the merits severally, as one attempts some interpretation, should be understood as saṃkhyā” (Radhakrishnan’s trans., op.cit.

¹⁹ Such enumeration is, indeed, prevalent to an unparalleled extent in the Abhidharma literature of Buddhism (see Guenther 1974), and is also very noticeable in Jaina texts such as the *Tattvārthadhigamasūtra* (ca. third or fourth century CE) (see Jaini 1920).

fn.4). This “weighing”—which is Radhakrishnan’s translation here of *pramāṇa*—seems, in the context of the quotation, to be very much like a calculation, and thus there has in fact been no discernible shift from the mathematical connotation of *sāṃkhyā* that was posited in the first place. Even if there had been such a shift, however, most interpreters agree that it is not a particularly major semantic adjustment to move from numerical reasoning to reasoning in general, and, as Suryanarayana Sastri points out (1948: viii–ix), Sanskrit would not be the only language that has a word embracing both meanings.²⁰ In any event, none of this is of great significance for the claim of Feuerstein and others that Sāṃkhya is “rationalistic” in its approach to soteriological practice; for, in the light of the distinction I have made between “compositional” and “soteriological” methodologies, the association of the term *sāṃkhyā* with reasoning may relate merely to the former (i.e. compositional methodology) and not to the latter.

Before moving on to discuss Feuerstein’s further claims regarding the alleged differences between Sāṃkhya and Yoga, I perhaps need to make it clear that I am not trying to maintain that the soteriological practice of Sāṃkhya entirely excludes rational thinking; I merely wish to reject what I consider to be the absurd proposal—no matter how many times it may have been trotted out—that Sāṃkhya expects its ultimate goal of self-realisation and the abandonment of empirical existence to be achievable by means of rational thought alone. The *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, being primarily a theoretical text and not a practical instruction manual, divulges little about the means by which the transformations in ethical conduct and self-understanding it describes are to be engendered. But the fact that the goal to be aimed at patently involves *puruṣa*’s dissociation from all mental processes ought to be sufficient in itself to indicate that the proponents of Sāṃkhya are intent upon the transcendence, not merely the culmination or fulfilment, of rational thinking. In my view, there is nothing in the *Kārikā* to suggest that the central element of classical Sāṃkhya’s soteriological methodology is not precisely the kind of sustained contemplative discipline advocated in the *Yogasūtra*; and the few hints that the *Kārikā* gives us—perhaps most especially the description of *tattva-abhyāsa* at verse 64—can best be understood in relation to Yoga discipline.²¹

²⁰ To illustrate his point he mentions the English terms “count” and “reckon” (“especially in the Americanism ‘I reckon so,’”), the German “zahlen”, and the Tamil “eṇ”, all of which can, in certain contexts, be taken to mean “think” and, in others, “count” (in the mathematical sense).

²¹ Cf. Sen Gupta (1982: 135): “The *tattvābhyāsa*, prescribed for liberation embraces *yogaparakriyā* which has been fully discussed in the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali.” Sen Gupta’s view is that the soteriological methodology of Sāṃkhya begins with verbal instruction and “rational reflection”, and then progresses toward meditation and *śamādhi* (see *ibid.*). This seems plausible.

Doctrinal framework

In view of the insubstantiality of the case for the existence of significant methodological differences between classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga, Feuerstein's subsequent claim (1980: 116) that these differences "initiated important conceptual and doctrinal divergencies which further increased the chasm between [the two] schools of thought" appears wildly exaggerated. (Have we really seen any evidence of such a "chasm"?). Feuerstein continues, nevertheless, to propose "three major points in the doctrinal structure of Classical Yoga which mark it off from Classical Sāṃkhya, viz. theology, ontology and psychology" (ibid.), and goes on to describe these areas more fully. I, too, shall give attention to each of them in turn.

Theology. Unlike several other prominent interpreters,²² Feuerstein does not claim that classical Sāṃkhya is atheist, but rather attributes to Īśvarakṛṣṇa "a typical agnostic stance" (pp. 116–17). In other words, Feuerstein takes the non-occurrence of the concept of *Īśvara* in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* to indicate that the text's composer held a non-committal position on the issue of *Īśvara*'s existence.²³ In my view, this is an unwarranted speculation, for I do not see how the absence of a definite statement on *Īśvara* can be regarded as evidence of *any* theological position, including agnosticism. It should also be noted that, notwithstanding the frequency with which Sāṃkhya's "atheism" has been declared by others, the classical text itself mentions a "divine" (*daiva*) realm, which is described as eightfold and an abundance (*viśāla*) of "lucidity" or "being-ness" (*sattva*) (*SK* 53–54). This realm is contrasted with organic nature, which is fivefold and abounds in "darkness" (*tamas*), and with the middle or human realm, which abounds in "activity" or "energy" (*rajas*) and on this model is not subdivided. At the end of *kārikā* 54 the proverbial expression "from Brahmā down to a blade of grass" occurs, suggesting that the preceding *kārikās* have accounted for all relevant types of beings. Since it would appear that all of these beings are manifestations of *prakṛti*, none of them can be equated with the *Īśvara* of classical Yoga, who is defined as a "special *puruṣa*" (*puruṣa-viśeṣa*, *YS* 1.24). But, nevertheless, if the pronouncements of *kārikās* 53 and 54 are taken seriously, then it must be recognised that Sāṃkhya posits a complex cosmology in which the "higher"

²² Such interpreters include: Keith (1949: 13 fn.1); Dasgupta (1922: 258–59); Radhakrishnan (1927 II: 255 fn.1); Chakravarti (1975: 65); Suryanarayana Sastri (1948: xvi).

²³ Davies, too, declares that, "in refusing to admit that there is anything higher than the individual soul which may enlighten or act upon it, he [i.e. Kapila] laid the foundation for a philosophical atheism, or what is now called agnosticism" (1894: 53). Cf. Radhakrishnan, who makes the apparently modest claim that "Sāṃkhya is not atheistic in the sense that it establishes that there is no God. It only shows that there is no reason for supposing there is one" (1927 II: 317). But not even this much is shown in the *SK*; it is only in the *SS* and the commentaries upon it that assertions of this kind are made (see e.g. *SS* 5.1 ff. and esp. Vijñānabhikṣu's *SPBh* thereon).

levels outnumber the categories of life-forms on earth. And with this in mind it is not unreasonable to speculate that one or more of these higher realms might be considered to be populated by the deities (*devas* and *devīs*) known to Vedic and post-Vedic (i.e. epic and Paurāṇic) mythology. So in what sense is the composer of the *Kārikā* to be regarded as “agnostic”?

Classical Sāṃkhya does not, of course, subscribe to the belief in a creator god who manufactures the universe out of nothing; neither does it have any affinity with the view, apparently taken by some preclassical versions of Sāṃkhya, that *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are ultimately reducible to an absolute principle (i.e. *brahman*), which might—if one wanted to give a religious air to a monist metaphysics—be referred to as “God”. But then neither does classical *Yoga* hold such views. As mentioned above, *Īśvara* is characterised in the *Yogasūtra* as a “special *puruṣa*”, who is free from defilements and actions and the residual consequences thereof (1.24). He harbours the “seed of omniscience”, is the “guru of even the earliest [yogins]”, and may be invoked by reciting the syllable *om* (1.25–28). But he does not constitute an additional ontological category, and therefore his existence is perfectly compatible with the ontology of classical Sāṃkhya. This leaves us with no basis upon which to assert that classical Sāṃkhya and *Yoga* differ with regard to theology. All we can say with certainty is that, among the contemplative methods outlined in the *Yogasūtra* is that of “applying oneself to” (*praṇidhāna*) an eternally perfect “self” known as *Īśvara*, and that no such method is mentioned in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*. In view of the fact that, as has been noted already, the latter text is not primarily a methodological treatise, this difference between Sāṃkhya and *Yoga* ought not, I would suggest, to be regarded as a “chasm”.

Ontology. The situation regarding Feuerstein’s “argument” that the *ontologies* of Sāṃkhya and *Yoga* are markedly different is somewhat baffling. On page 117 of the chapter that I have chiefly been discussing, he refers the reader back to “pp. 112 ff.” for this argument, and states that, “As I have tackled this question already, there is no need to repeat myself”. But there is no such attempt to “tackle” the question on page 112, nor on any subsequent page. These pages deal merely with the methodological issue that I have discussed above. We are therefore given *no* arguments in support of Feuerstein’s assertion that the ontologies are significantly different. This is unfortunate, since, in my view, the respective ontologies of Sāṃkhya and *Yoga* share so much in common with one another that the onus surely must be upon those who dispute this commonality to show where the divergence lies. Feuerstein’s position is further undermined by the fact that he, just like most others who endeavour to explicate *Yoga*’s onto-

logical schema, appears in several places earlier in the book to assume the identity—or, at least, the close similarity—of this schema with that presented in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*.²⁴

To illustrate the similarity between the classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga ontologies, I shall here give a few examples. Firstly, the “self” is, in both systems, identified with consciousness and referred to primarily as *puruṣa*. *Draṣṭṛ* (“seer”) is a synonym of this term in the *Yogasūtra* (1.3; 2.17, 20; 4.23), and this is echoed by the inclusion of *draṣṭṛtva* (lit. “seer-ness”, i.e. awareness) as one of the epithets of *puruṣa* at *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 19. Both systems agree that *puruṣa* is unconditioned by mental or physical factors, and that such factors de-manifest when *puruṣa*’s unconditionality is realised. *Puruṣa* is given a plural, individuated sense at *kārikā* 18, and this sense seems to be tacitly accepted at *Yogasūtra* 2.22, in which it is stated that, when phenomenal reality has ceased in relation to the self-realised *puruṣa*, it nevertheless continues in relation to others.

Secondly, that which is not itself conscious, but which manifests to, or in, consciousness is, in both systems, held to comprise three “strands” (*guṇas*), which are characterised as luminosity, activity, and stability respectively (*YS* 2.18; *SK* 12, 13). These manifest as a number of mental processes and capacities that in turn facilitate embodied, worldly experience. The processes and capacities, or forms of the *guṇas*, together constitute a schema of twenty-three principles, which is described from *kārikā* 22 onwards. It is generally accepted that Yoga recognises the same set of manifest principles (with, perhaps, some minor differences, which are for the most part only terminological), and that the Sāṃkhya schema can be used to explicate the broader categories presented at *Yogasūtra* 2.19 (see Table 1 below). Indeed, Feuerstein himself adopts such an exegetical approach (1980: 29).

Thirdly, the manifestation of the three *guṇas* as mental processes and capacities is, for both Sāṃkhya and Yoga, dependent upon their being in some kind of relation to *puruṣa*. This relation is in both cases referred to as *saṃyoga* (“conjunction”, *SK* 20, 21; *YS* 2.17, 23, 25), and is held to involve a projection, or imposition, of consciousness onto the inherently non-conscious forms of the *guṇas* (*SK* 20; *YS* 2.5). According to Sāṃkhya, as well as to Yoga, our entire experiential life supervenes upon a fundamental misidentification, or misunderstanding of the nature of the self.

²⁴ See e.g. Feuerstein 1980: 29–32, where Yoga’s “ontological map” is explained in terms of the Sāṃkhya principles and the *satkārya* theory is explained with reference to *SK* 9. Other instances include pp. 44–45, where the typically Sāṃkhyan exegeses of Vyāsa and Vācaspati are used to explain the term *aviśeṣa* as used in *YS* 2.19; and p. 58, where *citta* is treated as synonymous with the Sāṃkhya term *antaḥkaraṇa* (cf. my own discussion of terminology later in this chapter).

Table 1

Table showing how the principles of classical Sāṃkhya relate to the four “levels of [the manifestations of] the guṇas” (*guṇaparvāṇī*) listed at YS 2.19

Term used in <i>Yogasūtra</i> 2.19	Terms used in the <i>Sāṃkhyakārikā</i>
<i>aliṅga</i> —“unmarked, unmanifest”	<i>avyakta</i> —“unmanifest” (SK 2, 10); or <i>mūlaprakṛti</i> —“root of manifestation” (SK 3)
<i>liṅgamātra</i> —“mere mark”	<i>mahat</i> —“the great” (SK 22); or <i>buddhi</i> —“discernment, intellection” (SK 23)
<i>aviśeṣa</i> —“unparticularised”	<i>ahaṃkāra</i> —“I-maker, egoity” (SK 24); plus five <i>tanmātras</i> —“sense-contents or -data” (SK 24, 25, 38)
<i>viśeṣa</i> —“particularised”	five <i>bhūtas</i> —“elements” (SK 22, 38); plus five <i>buddhīndriyas</i> —“sense capacities, sensations” (SK 26); plus five <i>karmendriyas</i> —“action capacities, activities” (SK 26); plus <i>manas</i> —“organising mind” (SK 27)

The correspondence between the respective ontological categories of Yoga and Sāṃkhya presented in the table above is outlined in Vyāsa’s commentary on *Yogasūtra* 2.19, and has been accepted, with occasional minor variations, by virtually all subsequent commentators. It is evident from the *Yogasūtra* that the schema is neither an arbitrary construction nor an appendage (or “graft”) from outside the system as a whole. Rather, it is integral to the practical discipline of Yoga, which seems to involve the attainment of heightened states of awareness in which the forms or levels of the manifestations of the guṇas become sequentially apparent to consciousness. The sense in which these forms or levels are “known” in profound states of contemplation is extremely difficult to ascertain, and perhaps impossible to grasp outside the context of such contemplation itself. The mental states in which they become apparent are referred to as *samādhi* or *samāpatti*, both of which terms mean “mergence”, “coming together”, “integration”, etc. These states are said to be instantiated when the mind (or “memory”, *smṛti*) becomes so “pure” and devoid of its own form that the “thing (*artha*) alone shines forth” (YS 1.43; cf. 3.3). The “thing” that “shines forth” could, in principle, be any of an indefinite number of objects of contemplation, but more specifically it will be one of the levels of manifestation, or an item from one of those levels. The more fundamental the level that is merged with, the deeper (or higher, depending upon one’s preferred metaphor) will be the state of *samādhi*, until eventually all manifest forms are rejected, or disidentified with, and *puruṣa* realises its solitary independence. The means by which one stage of this process of self-understanding leads to the next is given scant attention in the sūtras, and is hardly better explained in the

traditional commentaries, but it would appear that intense and sustained introspective concentration (*abhyāsa*) combined with an attitude of non-attachment (*vairāgya*) somehow facilitates an unfolding of the various levels.

Feuerstein refers to the schema of principles as a “map” designed to guide and orientate the yogin on his “inward odyssey” (1980: 117). This is a perfectly valid analogy, for it would seem that the principles are intended to represent phenomenological factors that are recognised most vividly and distinctively in states of introspection. In the case of Sāṃkhya, however, Feuerstein’s commitment to his “distinct methodologies” thesis obliges him to deny that samādhi could play any part in the formulation of what Feuerstein terms its “ontogenetic” schema (1980: 117–18). It is, perhaps, the enormity and implausibility of the coincidence that would have to be admitted if one were to propose that two virtually identical schemata had been arrived at by entirely different methodologies, that compels Feuerstein, in the face of considerable evidence to the contrary, to maintain that there are “crucial divergencies in the ontological conceptions” of Sāṃkhya and Yoga (1980: 117).

Psychology. For the sake of completeness, I shall mention the points that Feuerstein makes on the respective psychological concepts of classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and also (in the next section) on the general differences in terminology between the two systems, although he in fact says very little on either matter (while nevertheless proclaiming their importance).

Feuerstein’s claim that the psychological concepts employed by Sāṃkhya and Yoga are significantly at variance to one another centres exclusively upon his interpretation of the term *citta*, which he considers to be “parallel” to, but “by no means synonymous with”, the Sāṃkhya terms *liṅga* and *karana* (1980: 118).²⁵ On Feuerstein’s reckoning, *liṅga* “somehow lacks the unifying and integrating strength” of *citta*. “Whereas *citta* is expressive of the dynamic interaction between the psychic structures—and thus is essentially a psychological concept—*liṅga* fails to convey any sense of dynamism or functional unity; it is primarily a static, analytic concept” (ibid.). These remarks strike me as being subjective responses to, or feelings about, the words concerned rather than more neutral observations of their use in particular contexts. Such responses can, I think, be at least partially explained by the fact that in the *Yogasūtra* *citta* is often either accompanied by or associated with *vr̥tti*, meaning literally “whirl” or “turning”. The expression *citta-vr̥tti* occurs in the definition of *yoga* given in the second sūtra, and also at 4.18. And in other places, where *vr̥tti* appears on its own (YS 1.4, 5, 41; 3.43), this term can nevertheless be assumed to stand for *citta-vr̥tti*, and thus to mean “mental states and activities” or “modifications of the mind”.

²⁵ What Feuerstein actually refers to is the “term *liṅga* (or *karana*),” thereby implying that *liṅga* and *karana* are interchangeable, which, in the *SK* at least, they are not (see below).

It is curious that Feuerstein should regard *liṅga* and *karaṇa* as “parallel” to *citta*, for such a relation is hardly indicated by their use in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*. The closest synonym of *citta* in that text is *antaḥkaraṇa*, the “inner instrument” (SK 33), which is said to comprise the three aspects known respectively as *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra* and *manas*.²⁶ The *antaḥkaraṇa* is distinguished from the *bāhya* (-*karaṇa*) or “outer instrument”, which comprises the ten “capacities” (*indriyas*, i.e. the five *buddhīndriyas* plus five *karmendriyas*). The *antaḥ*- and *bāhya*-*karaṇa* taken together are referred to as the “thirteenfold instrument” or simply as the “instrument” (*karaṇa*, SK 32). *Liṅga*, meanwhile, stands for all the manifest modes of *prakṛti* “from *mahat* down to the ‘subtle’ (*sūkṣma*)” (SK 40), i.e. the *karaṇa* *plus* the so-called “subtle elements” or *tanmātras* (which are better understood as the contents of sensations—see Chapter 6).

In a reference to *citta* earlier in his book (p. 58) Feuerstein notes this term’s synonymity with Sāṃkhya’s *antaḥkaraṇa*; and hence it is inexplicable why the same author should, in the subsequent chapter that I have been discussing, disregard this fact and compare *citta* with *liṅga* and *karaṇa* instead, neither of which terms is claimed by anyone to be synonymous with *citta*. Feuerstein rightly points out that traditional commentators upon the *Yogasūtra* “employ the terms *buddhi*, *antaḥkaraṇa* and *citta* rather indiscriminately” (p. 58), but in my view, if any lesson is to be drawn from this, it is that we should be wary of attaching too much importance to minor terminological differences between Sāṃkhya and Yoga.

Terminology

Despite what has just been said, I turn lastly to the final site of divergence proposed by Feuerstein, namely terminology. This is another instance in which Feuerstein believes that the case has already been conclusively proven by the inclusion of “numerous examples” in the main body of the book; and thus he considers it necessary merely to “remind the reader” by mentioning “such specific yogic terms as *aliṅga*, *liṅga-mātra*, *asmitā-mātra*, *aviśeṣa*, *viśeṣa*, *citta*, *vṛtti* and *pratyaya* which are either absent in the *Sāṃkhya-Kārikā* or else have an entirely different connotation” (p. 120).

The fact that a number of terms are used in the *Yogasūtra* that do not appear in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, and vice versa—and that certain terms appear in both texts but with slightly different meanings—is not a matter of dispute. But such differences remain trivial if they do not coincide with significant conceptual variations. With regard to Feuerstein’s list of “specific yogic terms” quoted above, the first three items are generally considered to be syn-

²⁶ Although the three aspects are not named in *kārikā* 33, the context makes it clear that it is these three that are being referred to.

onymous with *avyakta*, *maḥat*, and *ahaṁkāra* respectively, and I can see no reason for doubting that this is so. The other terms will be discussed below.

Aviśeṣa and *viśeṣa* occur in both the *Yogasūtra* and the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*. The meanings of these two terms vary a little according to the context in which they appear, but in most cases they can be understood as “non-specific” (or “unparticularised”) and “specific” (or “particularised”) respectively. In the *Yogasūtra* they occur together in only one place, that being 2.19, which has been referred to earlier in this chapter. In that sūtra, especially as interpreted by Vyāsa, *viśeṣa* appears to stand for the five elemental forms (*bhūtas*) plus the sensory and action capacities (*indriyas*) and the organisational or synthesising aspect of mind (*manas*), and *aviśeṣa* stands for the raw sense-data (*tanmātras*) plus the notion of individuated selfhood (*ahaṁkāra*). Nowhere in the *Kārikā* do we find *viśeṣa* and *aviśeṣa* being used in precisely this way, but we do find the *tanmātras* and *bhūtas* being distinguished from one another on the basis that the former are *aviśeṣa* and the latter are *viśeṣa* (SK 38), and this use accords with that in *Yogasūtra* 2.19.

Citta, as has been noted already, is semantically close to *antaḥkaraṇa*, and thus the difference between Sāṃkhya and Yoga in this regard amounts merely, or at least mainly, to a different choice of word. The last two terms in Feuerstein’s list, namely *vṛtti* and *pratyaya* certainly feature less prominently in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* than in the *Yogasūtra*; and, in the case of *vṛtti* especially, the sense of the term does vary somewhat between the two texts. But these variations can be adequately explained as consequences of the texts’ different emphases, without the need to postulate significant theoretical disparities. In the *Yogasūtra*, with its emphasis on psychological transformation by means of meditative discipline, *vṛtti* (as mentioned above) stands for a mental modification, operation or state. Five types of modification are outlined (YS 1.6–11), namely (i) knowing or veridically cognising (*pramāṇa*), (ii) misperceiving or misconceiving (*viparyaya*), (iii) conceptualising (*vikalpa*), (iv) sleeping dreamlessly (*nidrā*), and (v) remembering (*smṛti*). Meanwhile, in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*—which is concerned more with clearly delineating the psychosensory principles, and describing their modes of interaction, than with instructions on how to transform them—*vṛtti* retains the sense of “operation” (or “operative activity” or “function”), but is not so insolubly associated with the activities of the mind (*citta*, *antaḥkaraṇa*) as it tends to be in the *Yogasūtra*. Thus we find that, in classical Sāṃkhya, the respective functions of the three “strands” (*guṇas*), the ten “capacities” (*indriyas*), the three aspects of the “inner instrument” (*antaḥkaraṇa*), and the “inner” and “outer” instruments together (*karaṇa*), are all referred to as *vṛttis* (SK 12, 13, and 28–31). This is a broader usage of the term than that in the *Yogasūtra*, but not an incompatible one. And

since, for Sāṃkhya as for Yoga, the aim is to extinguish all the activities of the *guṇas* so that consciousness may abide in perfect tranquillity, there is no disagreement between the two systems that the *vṛttis* are to be dissolved, even though this point is made more emphatically in Yoga than in Sāṃkhya.

Pratyaya denotes a “content of consciousness”, which can be of many kinds. In most circumstances, *pratyayas* are *intentional* in the sense that they are representations of some object or other, but under certain conditions—notably during deep sleep (YS 1.10) and in advanced states of meditation (1.18)—a *pratyaya*, as this term is used in Yoga, can represent the *absence* of any object whatsoever. In the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, *pratyaya* appears only once, at verse 46, where it is conjoined with *sarga* (“effusion”, “emission”). The expression *pratyaya-sarga* can be understood as “the emissive flow of experience” or “succession of phenomenal mental contents”; or, in other words, the stream of experiential episodes that each of us encounters and which is commonly referred to as “life”. In both Yoga and Sāṃkhya, then, *pratyaya* stands for any mental content or experience.²⁷ And thus, again, there is no obvious semantic disagreement; it is merely the case that the term is used on far more occasions (ten in total) in the *Yogasūtra* than in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the above discussion I have endeavoured to show that the view taken of the relation between classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga by Feuerstein is an extreme and unwarranted one. He greatly exaggerates the extent to which the two systems differ, and does so ostensibly in order to vindicate Yoga’s position as a distinct *darśana*; that is, as a philosophical system in its own right, independent of Sāṃkhya. But such a vindication is demanded neither from within the *Yogasūtra* itself nor by the representatives of the Yoga tradition that flows from that founding text. The term *yoga* is defined in the *Yogasūtra* as a particular mental state—a state in which all activity has ceased and consciousness “abides in its own nature” (YS 1.2–3)—and the emphasis throughout the *sūtras* is upon ways of achieving that goal. There are, of course, theoretical excursions, but these tend to be relatively brief in relation to the passages in which soteriological practice is the primary focus. The theoretical foundation of Yoga practice is Sāṃkhya philosophy. Not exactly the same version of Sāṃkhya as is presented in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* (and thus it is overly simplistic to say that classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga are

²⁷ It is worth noting, in anticipation of discussions in later chapters, that there is nothing in the term *pratyaya* to imply that the mental content must necessarily be a representation of something external to the mind itself.

two aspects of the same system), but almost certainly a close ancestor of that version. The distinction invoked by Feuerstein, and by a considerable number of other interpreters, between a “rational” (or “rationalistic”) and a “mystical” methodology is highly inappropriate with regard to these Indian systems. While the *Yogasūtra* may in certain respects come across as the more dogmatic of the two texts, the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* is hardly overflowing with tightly reasoned arguments. Both of these works are laconic expressions of a body of teachings whose validity derives from their having been (according to tradition) revealed by a divine source or at least by a loftily elevated human one, and not primarily from their meeting some generally agreed standard of rational enquiry. And, in any case, as I have tried to make clear in this chapter, the methodology employed in composing a text, and that recommended for making progress towards one’s salvific goal, are two separate things.

It is my view—although I admit it is hard to prove conclusively merely from textual sources—that the soteriological methodologies of classical Yoga and Sāṃkhya are essentially the same, which is to say that they both involve prolonged and intense meditative discipline as the central component of a radical and systematic attempt at the transformation of self-understanding. Rational thinking has a part to play in this discipline, but the fact that the declared goal of both darśanas is to transcend all mental activity and to abide in “aloneness” (*kaivalya*)—in which consciousness remains devoid of content—indicates that rational thinking has to be abandoned at some point.

I hope, though, that rational thinking has not been abandoned in this chapter, and that I have succeeded in justifying my decision to treat classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga within the context of the same overall enquiry. I shall, on some occasions, employ the hyphenated expression “Sāṃkhya–Yoga”; not to try to imply that the two darśanas are identical or form a unitary system, but simply, where they are in agreement upon a particular matter, as an abbreviation for “Sāṃkhya and Yoga”. It will be left to the reader to judge whether I manage, in subsequent chapters, to draw fruitfully upon the complementary aspects of the two systems without glossing over or avoiding noteworthy discrepancies (both between Sāṃkhya and Yoga and *within* each of them).

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

“Realism”, “Antirealism”, and “Idealism” in Philosophical Discourse

CLASSICAL SĀṂKHYA AND YOGA have routinely been characterised as “realist”, both by their sympathisers and by their detractors (as well as by ostensibly neutral interpreters).¹ Sometimes this characterisation is made explicit by the use of the term “realist” (or “realistic”), whereas in other instances it remains implicit in the way that certain doctrines are presented. Whether explicit or implicit, however, attempts at such a characterisation often fail to explain exactly what the attribution of realism entails and why it should be applied to these darśanas in particular. And on the rare occasions when an explanation of this kind is offered, it is not always evident that the writer has more than a rudimentary understanding of the various meanings and connotations that have accrued to “realism” over the course of philosophical history.

One of the principal contentions that I am making in this study is that the “realism” of Sāṁkhya and Yoga has tended to be assumed rather than argued for, and that its assumption has resulted in the marginalisation, or in most cases the complete ignoring, of alternative (non-realist) interpretations of these darśanas. More than this, however, I wish to argue that the realist assumption has resulted in incoherent and implausible interpretations of the philosophies of Sāṁkhya and Yoga, and that a more tenable interpretation can be arrived at if the textual material is looked at afresh without this assumption’s encumbering influence.

If an intelligent discussion is to be had regarding the applicability, or inapplicability, of the notion of “realism” in relation to Sāṁkhya and Yoga, it is crucial that some degree of clarity be obtained concerning the ways in which it has been employed in philosophical discourse; and this is what I intend to achieve in this chapter. By “philosophical discourse”, I mean to include both the western philosophical tradition and the more recently-hatched tradition that deals with the interpretation of classical Indian philosophy in the light of western philosophical concepts. Since, however, the application of “realism” within an Indian philosophical context is, if it is to be at all hermeneutically useful, heavily reliant upon the meanings of that term, and terms that are closely associated with it, within the western milieu, it is upon that latter milieu that I shall concentrate in this chapter.

¹ Examples will be given in the next chapter.

It will not, of course, be possible to discuss realism without also dealing with alternative philosophical positions; indeed, the full implications of a realist position often become evident only when it is contrasted with its rivals. Historically, the chief rival to realism within the domain of metaphysics has been “idealism”—and this term has, like “realism” itself, been keenly appropriated and liberally employed by interpreters of certain Indian philosophies. A broader, though more recently coined, term is “antirealism”, which has the purely negative sense of being *opposed to* (some form of) realism. Just as there are many varieties of realism, so there are many types of antirealism, idealism being merely one of these, though itself having several sub-varieties.

Debates between realists and antirealists of various kinds continue to flourish within current western philosophy, although idealism is nowadays rarely considered to be one of the live options in the debate. This is at least partly due to the fact that idealism is a metaphysical position, and Anglo-American analytic philosophy has tended, especially from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, to prioritise questions of truth and meaning (semantics) over questions of metaphysics. The fact that the term “antirealism” has become so closely associated with these semantic issues might provide a possible explanation of why it has gone largely unused by interpreters of Indian philosophical traditions; which is not to say that these traditions entirely neglect semantic questions, but merely that it is their metaphysical doctrines that have more often been focused on in the interpretive literature.

To attempt in a single chapter a comprehensive survey of realism, antirealism and idealism in all their various guises would be wildly ambitious, and I do not propose to make such an attempt. Rather, I shall restrict my treatment to those aspects of the subject that I consider to be most relevant to the matters that are being addressed in this study as a whole. Relatively scant attention will be paid to “semantic” versions of realism and antirealism, since I’m not aware that any interpreters of Sāṃkhya and Yoga make use of the terms in this sense. In the early sections of the chapter I shall endeavour to show how diversely the concepts we are dealing with here have been interpreted by different philosophers, and to outline some of these philosophers’ major concerns. I then focus, in successive sections, upon the ideas of Berkeley and Kant in particular, each of whom exemplifies in a unique way some of the profound complications associated with the concepts of realism and idealism. In the final section I summarise some important criticisms and modifications of Kant’s philosophy proposed by Schopenhauer, and use this as an opportunity to introduce some aspects of Schopenhauer’s own thought that will furnish fruitful comparisons with Sāṃkhya and Yoga in later chapters.

It is my intention that, having taken a closer look at the invariably controversial nature of realist–antirealist discourse in this chapter, we will then be in a stronger position to evaluate claims about where in this often bewildering array Sāṃkhya and Yoga ought to be placed.

THE DIVERSITY OF REALISMS AND ANTIREALISMS

One of the points most frequently made by philosophers who have given careful consideration to issues concerning realism and its opposing stances is how enormously diverse the range of viewpoints is. This diversity relates not merely to different varieties of realism and antirealism, which may compete within a generally agreed definition of these terms, but, crucially, to the very understanding of what is *meant* by the terms themselves. Thus, “Although there is a considerable philosophical literature about realism and antirealism, there is no consensus about the meanings of the central terms or criteria for identifying views as versions of realism or antirealism” (Miller 2002: 13). “Realism” has been described by Crispin Wright as “a syndrome, a loose weave of separable presuppositions and attitudes” (1993: 3–4); while, in the case of “idealism”, A. C. Ewing has observed that, “To frame a formula which would include all the shades of opinion that have, more often than not, been described as idealist and exclude all those that have been, more often than not, described as realist is almost and quite beyond human capacity” (1934: 5).

Despite these considerable difficulties, there are some general remarks that can be made about the terms concerned, which may provide us with a point of departure for further discussion of them without overly circumscribing their meanings. One point that can be made, for example, is that the arguments between realists and antirealists of various kinds principally hinge upon the question of how minds in general, and the human mind in particular, relate to the things that are experienced by them (or it). At a very basic level, the term “realism” denotes a philosophical standpoint which asserts that certain kinds of things (in the case of “local” or “departmental” realisms) or the world as a whole (in the case of “global” realism) are “real” in the sense that they “really exist” independently of their being cognised (perceived or thought about) by a mind or experiencing subject.

As William Alston has noted, the range of things about which one can be a (departmental) realist is extremely broad, and includes “physical objects, events, universals, facts, propositions, intentional psychological states, space, time, meaning, God, and so on” (1996: 65; cf. 2002b: 2; 2002c: 97). Alston further points out that the antirealist positions, which such realisms are opposed to, tend to take one of two main forms, the first being a flat denial that the type of entity, or alleged entity, in question has any existence whatsoever, and the second be-

ing an attempt to show that the entity is not really what we ordinarily take it to be and can in fact be “reduced” to something else. An obvious example of the first variety would be the atheist’s flat denial of the existence of God (even though we do not normally refer to atheists as “antirealists about God”), while an example of the second variety would be the phenomenalist’s claim that physical objects are really (i.e. can be “reduced to”) “patterns of actual and possible sense data” (Alston 1996: 69).

It could be argued that the “flat denial” position can itself be reduced to the “reduction” form of antirealism, since what the atheist (for example) is really asserting is that “God” exists *merely as a concept*, or as a figment of the imagination, and not as a being who is independent of human thought. It would, after all, be self-contradictory to assert that a thing, or type of thing, has no ontological status whatsoever, including that of being a mere concept. The crucial distinction, however, is that the atheist holds that God is *entirely* mind-dependent, whereas the reductionist leaves open the possibility that (to stick with phenomenalism as an illustration) the patterns of sense-data, which we ordinarily take to be physical objects, do in fact derive in some way from something, or some *things*, outside of one’s perceptual apparatus.

It’s at this point that we start to notice the pliability of the concepts of realism and antirealism. For someone to count as a realist about God (i.e. a theist), all she has to do is assert God’s existence. Such a person might well, however, be an *antirealist* when it comes to the properties that other theists attribute to God. Indeed, she might hold that we can know nothing about God other than that such a being exists, in which case she would be an antirealist in relation to *all* attributions of properties to that being. Let us be clear, however, that, to be an antirealist of this kind is not necessarily to deny that God *has* properties; rather, it is to deny that, whatever those properties might be, there is no way in which we can know anything about them. This latter position closely parallels the view of physical objects taken by Kant, which is that, while the existence of objects *as things in themselves* is not to be denied, the properties that those things possess in themselves cannot be in any way accessible to us, all “outer experience” or knowledge of objects being mediated by the very psychosensory equipment we need in order for experience and knowledge to be possible. (Kant’s philosophy will receive further attention later.)

THE CONCEPT OF “MIND-DEPENDENCE”

We have seen already how important the part played by the concept of mind-dependence is in discussions of realism and antirealism. In this light, it might be believed that one could clarify

the definitions of, and sharpen the distinctions between, the various viewpoints by arranging them along a continuum, with the view of complete mind-dependence at one end and that of complete mind-*in*dependence at the other. On closer inspection, however, this is seen to be unfeasible, unless of course one is content to grossly over-simplify matters and thus risk distorting what usually turn out to be highly complex philosophical positions, which very rarely have one generally agreed-upon interpretation, and are even more rarely thoroughly self-consistent. Although some simplification is necessary, especially in such a brief treatment as the present chapter affords, I shall resist going down the "continuum" path. I shall instead try to highlight some of the ways in which the notion of mind-dependence/independence interrelates and occasionally conflicts with other important issues, often to do with the respective metaphysical stances of the philosophers concerned. I shall do so by making selective references to some of the notable figures in western (principally *modern*, i.e. post-sixteenth century, western) philosophy, leaving comparisons with Indian thought until the next chapter.

Let us, then, be careful to note some of the complications relating to the notion of mind-dependence itself. Before we go flinging this term around willy-nilly we need to be clear about what is meant by "mind" and what is meant by "dependent/independent" in this context, neither of which are straightforward matters. "Mind" can be understood in a number of ways according to one's metaphysical commitments, or lack of them. It could be regarded as an "immaterial substance", which is how the *res cogitans* of Descartes and the "spirit" of Berkeley (to give but two examples) are commonly interpreted. For both these philosophers the essence and definition of the mind derive from its activities. Descartes famously refers to the mind or soul (such terms are largely interchangeable for philosophers of the early modern period) as "a thinking thing" (1967 I: 190)—which is the usual, and most literal, rendering of the Latin expression *res cogitans*—and includes within his broad concept of "thinking" "not only meditations and acts of the will, but even the functions of sight and hearing, and the resolving on one movement rather than another" (quoted in Kenny 1968: 69; cf. Descartes 1967 I: 153, 222; II: 54). Berkeley, similarly, says of "spirit" (which he treats synonymously with "mind") that it "is one simple, undivided, active being" which "as it *perceives* ideas [...] is called the *Understanding*, and as it *produces* or otherwise *operates* about them [...] is called the *Will*" (1962: 77; cf. 135; 1944: 295). As descriptions of what the mind *does*, these statements are relatively uncontroversial in the history of western philosophy. More problematic is the characterisation of the mind as a "substance" that is fundamentally independent of matter. Descartes's definition of "substance" as "a thing which so exists that it needs no other thing in order to exist" (except God) (1967 I: 240) implies that the "thinking substance" known as a

mind is capable of existing with or without its being related to the “extended substance” known as a body.² Berkeley, meanwhile, flatly denies the existence of matter, thereby leaving minds as the exclusive occupants of the category “substance”. As we will see below, in view of the fact that what we ordinarily refer to as physical objects do not go away merely because one disparages the concept of matter, Berkeley was obliged to redefine those objects as “ideas”. These are not themselves substances but, rather, “inert, fleeting, or dependent beings, which subsist not by themselves, but are supported by, or exist in minds or spiritual substances” (1962: 109). That minds are substances, however, and that they are immaterial, Descartes and Berkeley would agree upon.

Notwithstanding this agreement, the legitimacy of the characterisation of mind as an immaterial or spiritual substance is highly questionable. If, as Schopenhauer has argued (1966 I: 490–91), the concept of “substance” is an unwarranted abstraction from that of “matter”, then “immaterial substance” becomes an oxymoron.³ Schopenhauer himself anticipated modern physicalism (at least in its functionalist versions) by identifying the mind, or “intellect”, as “the mere function of the brain, which therefore precedes it just as the stomach precedes digestion” (1966 II: 214, cf. 233),⁴ which view, it must be said, baldly contradicts the assertions that he makes, when wearing his “idealist” hat, to the effect that all physical objects (of which the brain is one) have the characteristics that they do merely insofar as they are the representations that arise in the mind of an experiencing subject.⁵

Further competing conceptions of “mind” include those obtaining within certain grandiose metaphysical systems, one example being the *Geist* (“mind/spirit/psyche”) of Hegel, which, though notoriously resistant to coherent interpretation, appears to stand for both individual minds and, at the same time, a global over-mind that strives, via the historical evolution of human thought and institutions (epitomised in the State), “to understand and examine what

² Cf. John Cottingham’s interpretation of Descartes’s Sixth Meditation in Honderich 1995: 771 (under “*res cogitans*”).

³ “[‘Substance’] is an exceedingly superfluous concept, because its only true content already lies in the concept of matter, beside which it contains only a great void. This void can be filled up by nothing except the surreptitiously introduced secondary species *immaterial substance*; and that concept was formed solely to take up this secondary species. Strictly speaking, therefore, the concept of substance must be entirely rejected, and that of matter be everywhere put in its place” (Schopenhauer 1966 I: 491).

⁴ For an illustrative modern physicalist view, see Daniel Dennett 1991, in which it is asserted (p. 33) that “the mind is somehow nothing but a physical phenomenon. In short, the mind is the brain.”

⁵ See the first book of *The World as Will and Representation* (in both volumes), of which the following statement is typical: “That which knows all things and is known by none is the *subject*. It is accordingly the supporter of the world, the universal condition of all that appears, of all objects, and it is always presupposed [...]” (1966 I: 5). Christopher Janaway has argued (1989, ch. 6, esp. pp. 184 ff.) that there is a tension but not a contradiction between the physicalist and idealist standpoints in Schopenhauer’s work. To me, this would seem more plausible if Schopenhauer had openly admitted the tension; but as his major work stands, it contains statements of one sort in some places, and statements of another sort in other places, with apparently no attempt to synthesise them.

belongs to it, in order to possess and grasp itself in a truer, deeper, more intimate and unified manner" (Hegel, in Petry 1970 I: 202). Another example is the *Ich* ("I", ego) of J. G. Fichte's philosophy, which term is, like Hegel's *Geist*, not restricted to the individual, personal mind, but is used to signify something that, although transcendent of space and time, is capable of projecting or, in Fichte's somewhat excessively used term, "positing" (*setzen*) both itself as subject and the world in general as object (see e.g. Fichte 1970: 273).⁶

With regard to the concepts of dependence-upon and independence-of mind, or minds, we should be clear what is *not* at issue. When, for example, a realist about physical objects asserts that such objects are "mind-independent", it should not be assumed that she is thereby denying that those objects can be *affected* in any way by minds. It would be perfectly acceptable for a realist to affirm that one's mind, or certain mental events, are in large measure responsible for one's bodily movements (the body, of course, being taken to be a physical object), and that by means of such movements a considerable degree of influence is able to be exerted upon other physical objects and the environment in general. If our posited realist is also an eliminative physicalist (i.e. if she denies that there is anything more to mental facts than neurophysiological ones) then she might point out that, on her view, to say that the mind is responsible for a bodily action is merely to say that a component of the body itself is so responsible. This, however, is a separate matter. The key point here is that the kind of *causal* relation that obtains between bodies (and other physical objects) and minds, in which the former are, or are not, affected in some way by the latter, is not at issue, or at least is not the main issue in the present context. Rather, what is at issue is what Alston (1996: 74) has called the *constitutive* dependence of something upon a mind, which, as the term suggests, involves that thing's being in some way *constituted by* minds or by the activities thereof. For the realist, the thing in question owes none of its essential constitution to minds (although, as we shall see, certain of its properties or qualities may not conform to this description), whereas, on the most extreme idealist position, the thing is entirely mental.

THE MENACE OF SCEPTICISM

Realism, in some form or other, can legitimately be regarded as the pre-philosophical or "common-sense" starting-point for our view of the relation between the items we encounter in our thoughts and perceptions and the entities that are supposed to correspond to those items in the "external world". Indeed, it has been noted that there is a definite "naturalness" or

⁶ Hegel, too, speaks of "positing" in a vague way; for example, of God's "positing [...] his other, the living process, the world" (Petry 1970 I: 204).

“intuitiveness” about the realist position, and that this makes the position hard to break free from.⁷ Bryan Magee, for example, has argued that, in order to grasp and appreciate the particular form of idealism proposed by Kant and subsequently taken up by Schopenhauer, it is necessary to uproot extremely deeply-held “realistic assumptions” that ordinarily colour our attitudes and responses to the world (Magee 1983: 106). Magee even suggests that the effort required to remove or transform such assumptions is analogous to the rigorous deconditioning involved in eastern contemplative disciplines. Such a suggestion echoes to a large extent Schopenhauer himself, who regards realism as a “natural and childlike” disposition of the intellect, which Kant’s (and his own) teaching is alone capable of dispelling (1966 I: xxiii–xxiv). It might be added that Schopenhauer, being somewhat favourably predisposed towards Indian-style contemplative discipline, is likely to have concurred with Magee’s analogy, whereas Kant himself rejected introspective methods as unreliable, preferring an exclusively rational path.⁸

The naivist version of realism would refuse to recognise any distinction between external entities and the representations we have of them in perception, our awareness of objects being held to be completely unmediated by subjective (or cultural, etc.) factors.⁹ Philosophical or scientific considerations, however, immediately bring this naïve view into question by pointing up the fact that the process by means of which conscious beings such as ourselves come to be aware of objects in their environment involves several steps, and that these steps are of a sort that cannot avoid furnishing us with perceptions that *represent* but do not *duplicate* (and perhaps do not even remotely *resemble*) the objects as they stand independently of us. It is considerations such as this that lead to “scientific realism”, according to which, although the world as we experience it is not how the world *really* is, we can nevertheless, by following appropriate scientific procedures, come to *know* how the world really is, i.e. its fundamental constituents, the natural laws that govern it, and so forth. Since scientific enquiry is an ongoing process, in which new theories are constantly replacing outdated ones, it could turn out

⁷ David Hume, for example, speaks of the “vulgar” view (1978: bk 1, sect. 2), while Husserl calls it the “natural standpoint” (see e.g. 1931: 107 f.). However, the view that idealism is counter-intuitive and that realism is the most popular default position has been rejected by some realists. An example is Samuel Alexander, who claims that the realist faces a strenuous uphill task if he is to overcome the inherent attractiveness of idealism: “so deeply ingrained and so natural is the self-flattering habit of supposing that mind, in its distinctive character of mind, is in some special sense the superior of physical things, so that in the absence of mind there would be no physical existence at all, that Realism in questioning its prerogative appears to some to degrade mind and rob it of its riches and value” (1960: 186). I suspect that a brief survey of public opinion on whether “in the absence of mind there would be no physical existence” would be enough to indicate that Alexander has got it back to front.

⁸ “Kant never tires of repeating the point that we have no special access to our minds [...]. In the *Anthropology*, he criticizes introspection as unreliable, unstable, unnatural, and a potential route to lunacy!” (Kitcher 1990: 6).

⁹ Cf. Fred Dretske in Honderich 1995: 602 (under “naïve realism”).

that we never manage to discover the whole truth about the world (i.e. about reality *per se*), whatever the "whole truth" might amount to. The important point for the scientific realist, however, is that the truth about reality is *in principle* discoverable.

Hilary Putnam (1987: 3–4) makes fun of scientific realism by comparing it with "the Seducer in the old-fashioned melodrama", who steals away the "Innocent Maiden" by making false promises. On Putnam's comparison, the scientific realist assures the maiden that he will save her from the fiendish antirealists ("Idealists, Kantians and Neo-Kantians, Pragmatists") who seek to deprive her of the ordinary physical objects with which she is familiar, such as "ice cubes and chairs". "But", Putnam continues,

when they have traveled together for a little while the 'Scientific Realist' breaks the news that what the maiden is going to get *isn't* her ice cubes and tables and chairs. In fact, all there *really* is—the Scientific Realist tells her over breakfast—is what 'finished science' will say there is—whatever that may be. (Ibid.)

What is suggested in this amusing parable is that scientific realism ends up leaving us in a somewhat precarious position: we can no longer take the physical objects with which we interact daily to be genuinely real, and yet our judgement about what *is* real must be suspended until science reaches its final conclusion, which, as noted above, could be a long way off (and how could we possibly tell *how far* off it is?).

An early version, or perhaps precursor, of scientific realism is found in the philosophy of John Locke (1632–1704), who, following Descartes and the "corpuscularian" theories of his scientific contemporaries such as Robert Boyle, famously distinguished between the "primary" and "secondary" qualities of perceptual objects. Our experience of both types of qualities is, on Locke's account, mediated by our sense faculties, the difference between them residing in the following fact: that, in the case of primary qualities, one's faculties do not in any respect change the qualities, but represent them faithfully to the intellect; whereas, in the case of secondary qualities, the representation of them given to the intellect bears no obvious similarity to the qualities themselves, despite its being dependent upon them. As examples of primary qualities Locke initially identifies "*solidity, extension, figure* [i.e. shape], and *mobility*" and subsequently adds "number" and "texture" (1975: 135). In the category of secondary qualities, meanwhile, he places "colours, sounds, tastes, smells, pleasure and pain, *etc.*" (1975: 558). Despite some ambiguity in Locke's use of the expression "secondary qualities", it is evident that he holds these to be certain capacities, or "powers", which inhere in external objects but which are capable of producing sensations ("simple ideas" in Locke's terminology)

of various kinds in experiencing subjects, and it is by the names of these types of produced sensation that the so-called secondary qualities are referred to.

Philosophers and scientists of seventeenth-century Europe were keenly aware of the danger (as many of them saw it) of scepticism, in the direction of which the Galilean–Cartesian, and later Lockean, distinction between primary and secondary qualities seemed to lead. The reason why it might lead to scepticism—i.e. dubiety that there is any external and “objective” world whatsoever—is that, if a supposedly external object appears to us to *be* of a certain colour, and to feel and taste and smell a certain way, etc.—and yet, in the light of careful considerations about the workings of our sensory apparatus and so forth, the object is understood not to possess these characteristics at all—then the question naturally arises whether there is *any* quality that the object appears to have which may not turn out to be a creation of the perceiving subject. Some philosophers, such as Pierre Bayle for example, openly embraced the conclusion that we have no firm grounds upon which to assert the mind-independent existence of physical entities,¹⁰ while many viewed it as nothing less than disastrous, and to be combatted by all rational means (cf. Antoine Arnauld in Popkin 1983: 381).

The modern scientific paradigm has abandoned the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, at least insofar as these apply to macroscopic physical entities. The solidity, extension, shape and motion of such entities are seen as being just as much the products of the interaction between subjects and an objective reality as are such things as colour, sound, etc. We *see* and *feel* a lump of granite, for example, as solid, extended in three dimensions, and having a particular shape; but, physical science tells us, the granite is not *really* solid, and nor does it have a tightly maintained boundary that would enable us to specify its shape and degree of extension. In fact, strictly speaking, there is no “it” whatsoever; there is merely an empty space with a constantly changing number of tiny particles whizzing around in it. And since no-one really knows where the analysis of those tiny particles will end, the scientists, and hence the rest of us as well, are always in the position of aiming in the direction of knowledge without ever reaching it. (Which point brings us back to Putnam’s image of the deceptive seducer.) It is at least arguable, however, that the notion of certain irreducible qualities of matter, which together define what we *mean* by the expression “physical entity”, has not been

¹⁰ Speaking of philosophers who accept the primary/secondary distinction, Bayle notes (in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* of 1694) that “They were willing to except extension and motion, but they could not do it; for if the objects of our senses appear to us coloured, hot, cold, smelling, though they are not so, why should they not appear extended and figured, at rest, and in motion, though they had no such thing. Nay, the object of my senses cannot be the cause of my sensations: I might therefore feel cold and heat, see colours, figures, extension, and motion, though there was not one body in the world. I have not therefore one good proof of the existence of bodies” (quoted in Popkin 1983: 380).

abandoned entirely; physical science has merely postponed the attribution of those qualities to any specific entity until the ultimate (i.e. indivisible) particles of matter are "discovered". But, as Kant's Second Antinomy indicates (A434/B462 ff.), the notion of infinite divisibility is just as crucial to the concept of matter as is that of simple (indivisible) parts, by which fact is revealed a fundamental antagonism at the heart of "matter" as it is conceived of by physicalists, and by realists generally—and thus the postponement could be an indefinite one.

Returning, though, to the situation in the seventeenth century, we can note that the anti-sceptics responded to the perceived threat of scepticism in one of two principal ways. One was to combine a reaffirmation of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities with an assertion of the fundamental reliability of our natural intuitions concerning the externality of physical objects; and the other was to abolish the primary/secondary distinction, reducing both types of qualities to mind-dependent ones, while contending that mind-dependent phenomena can nevertheless possess some kind of objective existence (even though it is not to be regarded as a *physical* existence). The first strategy is roughly that adopted by Descartes and Locke, and is a form of realism. The second, having been partially arrived at by Malebranche (1980, esp. Appendix), is most closely associated with George Berkeley, and is usually regarded as an exemplary form of idealism, although, as we shall see in the next section, this characterisation is somewhat complicated by his conception of the role of God.

God, in fact, figures prominently in the theories of each of the philosophers I have just mentioned, though perhaps least so in the case of Locke (as far, in any event, as his epistemology is concerned). Descartes's metaphysics and epistemology—specifically his view that, not only is there a material world, but we can have reliable knowledge about it—relies on God's being the creator of all things and on His not wishing to deceive us about the things we experience.¹¹ This is, however, to presuppose that belief in the mind-independent existence of physical entities is the immediate corollary of accepting the evidence of our senses to be trustworthy. Of course, as has already been noted, we do, *qua* conscious human subjects, have an inherent inclination—or, as Malebranche puts it, a "natural propension" (quoted in Grayling 1986: 4)—to attribute an external and material reality to the things we wakefully experience. But to hold that it must therefore necessarily be the case that those things do in fact exist externally and materially is to have faith not merely in the beneficence of a divine creator, but also in one's own pre-philosophical judgements *about* the things one experiences. And since

¹¹ See e.g. Descartes's Sixth Meditation (1968: 168): "I must not in any way doubt the truth of these things [i.e. perceived objects], if, after having called upon all my senses, my memory and my understanding to examine them, nothing is reported to me by any one of these faculties which conflicts with what is reported to me by the others. For as God is no deceiver, it follows necessarily that I am not deceived in this."

not all realists (i.e. realists about physical objects) are theists, especially in the late modern period, it is perhaps the latter kind of faith that is the more fundamental prerequisite for realism.

Malebranche, who has just been mentioned, was highly dubious about the powers of finite minds to overcome the gap that had been opened up by Cartesian epistemology between perceptual representations of objects on the one hand and the (supposedly) physical correlates of those representations on the other. And thus, in order to resist the drift towards scepticism, he opted for a denial of the distinction between the two sides of the gap, thereby eradicating the gap completely and identifying representations (“ideas”) with—or *as*—the things themselves. This, essentially, is the idealist move: to deny that the world is beyond the mind (“out there”), and to affirm that our experiences are therefore perfectly reliable indicators of how the world is, but always with the crucial caveat that it is the world *of experience* that is being spoken of. Now, since Malebranche did not want to go the whole hog and discount the existence of mind-independent physical entities altogether, material substance is retained in his metaphysics with the precarious status of something “indemonstrable, unknowable and unimportant” (Popkin 1957: 5; cf. Grayling 1986: 4–5). Its claim to existence becomes still more tenuous when it is noted that Malebranche, and Bayle after him, held that, even if there was no matter in the universe whatsoever, and all that existed were a multiplicity of finite spiritual beings plus one omnipotent and infinite spiritual being (namely God), then the latter’s power would be sufficient to account for all of our thoughts and perceptions (cf. Popkin 1983: 381; Grayling 1986: 7). Berkeley, it could be said, seized upon such views as these and ran with them, establishing a radical anti-materialist philosophy that has extremely important (though far from straightforward) implications for our understanding of realism and idealism.

BERKELEY’S “THEISTIC REALISM”

Since our main purpose in this chapter is to get a better grasp of certain key concepts, and not to try to achieve a complete understanding of the philosophies of particular individuals, we need not worry about whether Berkeley’s philosophy is covered in its entirety here. (We can be fairly certain that it will not be, although I shall of course do my best not to misrepresent it.) Berkeley is of considerable interest to the present discussion, because his philosophical writings, and the various and often conflicting ways in which they have been characterised and commented upon, highlight some of the difficulties and complexities connected with the relation between minds and “the world”.

One of the fascinating points about Berkeley is that, while he has been, and continues to be, widely portrayed as a philosopher who epitomises the idealist point of view (his philosophy was labelled by Kant, for example, as "mystical and fanatical idealism" (1997: 45)), upon closer investigation it becomes evident that he is perhaps more accurately represented, and indeed saw himself, as a realist, albeit a theistic rather than a scientific one. Before focusing in on why Berkeley might be viewed as either realist or idealist, or some combination of both, it is worth mentioning a couple of other terms which feature prominently in accounts of Berkeley's position, namely "immaterialism" and "phenomenalism". The use of the first of these is easily justified, as it was applied to his philosophy by Berkeley himself (e.g. 1962: 252, 254–55).¹² Berkeley held that the threat of scepticism, that was discussed in the last section, could be averted—and a great many seemingly intractable philosophical conundrums dissolved—in one clean sweep by simply abandoning the concept of "matter" as it had been hitherto understood, and replacing it with an "immaterialist" view of experience. According to this latter view our perceptions (or "ideas", in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century parlance) do not "correspond to" or "represent" external objects, but, rather, *are* those objects. Berkeley rejected the supposition that what we have come to call material entities "have a natural subsistence of their own, distinct from being perceived by spirits" (1962: 107–08), and instead famously asserted the motto "*esse is percipi*", i.e. the very existence of a thing consists in its being perceived (see e.g. 1962: 66–68; cf. 109). His position, then, involves a "reduction" of external physical entities to patterns of sense-data (or "phenomena"), and, as noted earlier in this chapter, it is essentially to this reduction that the term "phenomenalism" applies.

It would be difficult to maintain that Berkeley was a full-blown phenomenalist, since neither the term nor any precise formulation of the standpoint it denotes were available to him; but it has been suggested by some commentators (e.g. Warnock 1962: 36; Fumerton 1995: 386) that Berkeley was a forerunner for certain more recent philosophers such as Alfred Ayer and C. I. Lewis, both of whom took an explicitly phenomenalist stance (see e.g. Ayer 1946, esp. 53–54, 63–68; Lewis 1946). As an illustration of Berkeley's proto-phenomenalism, Fumerton (1995: 386) cites a passage from the Third Dialogue, in which Hylas and Philonous are discussing the Biblical creation story, and where Philonous remarks that, had he "been present at the creation, [he] should have seen things produced into being; that is, *become perceptible*, in the order described by the sacred historian [i.e. by Moses]" (Berkeley 1962: 245; my brackets and emphasis). Such a statement can be read phenomenalistically because, in

¹² In the Third Dialogue, for example, Berkeley has Hylas exclaim: "What doubts, what hypotheses, what labyrinths of amusement, what fields of disputation, what an ocean of false learning, may be avoided by that single notion of *immaterialism*!" (Berkeley 1962: 254; original emphasis).

view of Berkeley's ontology, which allows the existence only of minds (or "spirits") and "ideas", Philonous must be understood to be making an assertion about what he would have *experienced* had he been in a specific place at a specific time, rather than (or in place of) an assertion about what happened in terms of a supposedly objective sequence of events concerning mind-independent physical entities. This shift of descriptive emphasis, from "things in the world" to configurations of sense-data and possible sense-data—which shift is typical of phenomenalism—need not necessarily entail idealism; as, in itself, the descriptive shift does not imply any commitment to the existence or non-existence of physical objects. In Berkeley's case, however, it does appear, at least at first glance, to be allied with idealism; for his claim is not merely that supposedly physical events can be equally well described as perceptual sequences, but is, more strongly, that there *are no "physical" events* to be spoken of, and that, in consequence of this, there is no alternative (if one is not to talk nonsense) except to speak of phenomena rather than physical things (and, if we are to continue to use terms such as "physical" and "material", they must be redefined and *understood* phenomenally).

On the mind-dependent criterion, then, Berkeley seems to be proposing an idealist view of objects. And since, unlike Kant (who will be the subject of further discussion below), Berkeley denies the existence of any "thing in itself" (in relation to which the items of experience are "appearances" or "representations"), he would have to be classed as an *absolute* idealist. An absolute idealist position is, however, highly problematic, as it lacks any element that might be used to account for the "commonality" or "sharedness"—in other words, the objective, or at least intersubjective, status—of the world we inhabit, which we take so much for granted. If the only things that exist are minds and ideas (phenomena), and the latter can only subsist in the former,¹³ then several awkward questions arise. For a start we might want to enquire where these phenomena come from; and secondly: How is it that there seems to be a remarkably high degree of continuity both between phenomena that I experience at different times (even when separated by intervals of sleep, for example) and between the phenomena that *I* experience and those which the people (minds, spirits) around me report themselves as experiencing? Surely, if Berkeley's ontology were true, every mind would have its own unique set of phenomena, and hence each of those minds would be closeted in its own solipsistic world with no communication between them being possible.

It is in response to such objections that Berkeley plays his trump card, which is the "God card". Berkeley, being a committed theist (a priest, and later a bishop, no less), is able to claim

¹³ See e.g. Berkeley (1962: 109): "[ideas] are inert, fleeting, or dependent beings, which subsist not by themselves, but are supported by, or exist in minds or spiritual substances."

that the objects we, as finite spirits,¹⁴ experience only exist in us so long as we are in fact experiencing them—which may in many cases be merely momentarily—but they exist in the mind of God completely and enduringly. Thus when, in the Third Dialogue, Hylus points out to Philonous that, although the doctrine of the mind-dependence of perceptual objects may be true, it must surely be admitted to be “shocking, and contrary to the common sense of men”—and further adds: “Ask the fellow, whether yonder tree hath an existence out of his mind: what answer, think you, he would make?”—Berkeley has Philonous reply:

The same that I should myself, to wit, that it doth exist out of his mind. But then to a Christian it cannot surely be shocking to say, the real tree existing without his mind is truly known and comprehended by (that is, *exists in*) the infinite mind of God. [...] The question between the materialists [i.e. those who assert the existence of matter, but not necessarily to the exclusion of immaterial substance] and me is not, whether things have a real existence out of the mind of this or that person, but whether they have an absolute existence, distinct from being perceived by God, and exterior to all minds. This indeed some heathens and philosophers have affirmed, but whoever entertains notions of a Deity suitable to holy scriptures, will be of another opinion. (1962: 225; original emphasis, my square brackets)

Thus we see that the introduction of God into Berkeley's metaphysical schema—or, rather, the explicit disclosure of His role in it—radically changes the sense in which perceptual objects can be regarded as mind-dependent. No longer are they dependent upon the minds of finite individuals in any way whatsoever. Such minds merely provide occasions for objects to be experienced by someone other than their divine creator; and, in the absence of those minds, the objects would continue to exist anyway, their mind-dependence consisting solely in dependence upon the mind of God Himself. As rightly expressed by Berkeley, through his mouthpiece Philonous, the *God*-dependence of perceptual objects (along with that of finite spirits) is perfectly consistent with Christian doctrine. But, non-theists (and non-Christians in particular) might think: Hasn't Berkeley simply pulled a fast one here? Somewhat in the manner of Putnam's seducer, he has led us down the garden path—only, in this case, a path that we believed was going to end with an explanation of how objects can be understood as dependent (i.e. *constitutively* dependent) upon the minds of experiencing subjects—only to reveal at the eleventh hour that objects are not *really* mind-dependent in the sense that we'd supposed him to mean at all. They are merely dependent upon the mind and will of God; which claim seems to stand well outside the boundary of theoretical philosophy. In my view this would be a fair assessment to make of what Berkeley has done. The qualification should be added, however, that he has also taught us to question more thoroughly what is meant by

¹⁴By “finite”, I take Berkeley to mean here that, being creatures of the *infinite* spirit (namely God), individual spirits can be neither omnipotent nor omniscient. They are, however, immortal in the sense that they will persist indefinitely, as long, of course, as God wishes them to persist (1962: 136–37).

such terms as “matter” and “material (or physical) entity”. One might think that he has merely exchanged the Cartesian dualism of minds and material things for a different version of dualism, comprising two kinds of non-material things, namely minds and ideas. But he has done considerably more than that: by entirely rejecting the concept of matter as something external to sensory experience, he has pushed open a little wider the door that leads, via a particular line of thinking developed in the superlative mind of Kant, to a form of idealism which, unlike Berkeley’s position, does not turn out to be a kind of theistic realism.¹⁵ And it is to Kant’s philosophy that I shall turn in the following section.

KANT’S TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM AND EMPIRICAL REALISM

It was the German philosopher Christian Wolff who, in the early eighteenth century, first used the term “idealist”. “Those thinkers are called ‘idealists’”, he wrote, “who acknowledge only ideal objects existing in our minds, denying the independent reality of the world and the existence of material bodies” (*Psychologia rationalis*, sect. 36, quoted in Rescher 1995: 227). With such a definition in view, one can appreciate why Berkeley has so often been characterised as an idealist, even though, as we have seen above, any such characterisation must be heavily qualified due to his theological commitments. Kant certainly saw Berkeley as being an idealist,¹⁶ and since Kant was sharply aware of the solipsistic (and frankly implausible) implications of a position that admits the existence only of minds and cognitive and perceptual phenomena, he was keen to distance himself from the kind of idealism spoken of by Wolff and exemplified (as Kant and many of his contemporaries saw it) by Berkeley. It was, then, to Kant’s immense dismay that the first edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) was, despite his efforts to distinguish his own position from those of previous philosophers, taken by some reviewers to be proposing exactly the kind of idealism of which he so disapproved. Kant’s reaction was, first, to compose the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783), which is essentially an attempt to summarise in plainer language the main proclamations of the *Critique*, and secondly, to heavily revise the *Critique* itself in such a way that it would be less likely to be interpreted along lines that Kant held to be mistaken. Especially noteworthy in this regard is the insertion into the *Critique*’s second edition (1787) of a section entitled “Refutation of Idealism”, in which Kant tries to make more explicit than ever what he consid-

¹⁵ The expression “theistic realism” is the view, notes Grayling (1986: 130), “that things may exist independently of the thought and experience of finite minds, their objectivity and independence relative to finite minds being explained by the fact that they exist in the mind of God.”

¹⁶ See e.g. the opening paragraph of Kant’s Refutation of Idealism (B274) and *Prolegomena* 4:293 (1997: 45) already cited on p. 83 above.

ers to be wrong with the kind of view that he here labels "*material* idealism" (B274) and elsewhere refers to as "empirical idealism" (A369 ff.), and thereby to distinguish it more definitely from his own "transcendental" or "critical" idealism.¹⁷ By way of an entry point into a discussion of Kant's own position, I shall outline below the criticisms he makes of alternative "idealisms".

Kant defines "material idealism" as "the theory which declares the existence of objects in space outside us either to be merely doubtful and indemonstrable or to be false and impossible" (B274), and goes on to identify the former view as the "*problematic* idealism of Descartes" (which he calls "*sceptical*" idealism at A377) and the latter as the "*dogmatic* idealism of Berkeley" (B274; cf. A377). Kant appears to be using the term "idealism" here in place of the older term "scepticism", and to be portraying Descartes's view as an epistemological scepticism, i.e. scepticism about whether we can know that there is an external world, and Berkeley's as a metaphysical scepticism, i.e. the straightforward denial that an external world exists. They are, in Kant's terms, forms of "material idealism" insofar as they both claim that what we ordinarily take to be external material entities are really internal, purely phenomenal, ones. Kant's treatment of the two positions is only partial, as it makes no reference to the role played by God in each of them; which role, as we have seen, changes the nature of the respective positions dramatically, turning Cartesian doubt into Cartesian certainty and Berkeleyan idealism into theistic realism. This is not, however, an oversight on Kant's part; it merely reflects his view that the question of whether God exists cannot be resolved by means of speculative metaphysics, which view entails that to try to prove the objective existence of physical entities (in Descartes's case) or of ideas (in that of Berkeley) on the assumption of God's existence is an illegitimate manoeuvre.¹⁸

Kant's critique of Berkeley's view is not contained in the Refutation of Idealism, for he considers the view to have been refuted already in an earlier section, which I shall come to in due course. With regard to the refutation of Cartesian ("problematic") idealism, meanwhile, Kant sees his main task as being to "show that we have *experience*, and not merely imagination, of outer things" (B275). The kind of argument he adopts is, as so often in the *Critique*, a "transcendental" one; which is to say, an argument that begins by noting something (e.g. a

¹⁷ All quotations from Kant's *CPuR* are from Norman Kemp Smith's translation (1965 edition). Regarding the letters "A" and "B", see Abbreviations (p. vii).

¹⁸ Kant's principal critique of hitherto arguments for the existence of God are to be found in the third section of the chapter entitled "The Ideal of Pure Reason" (A583/B611 ff.). His own view, that the "transcendental idea" of a supreme unconditioned being is a necessary ground for the possibility of all conditioned reality (but cannot, on that basis alone, be supposed to exist), occurs in the previous section of the same chapter.

feature of experience) whose occurrence would be exceedingly difficult to deny, and then proceeds to make a case for some other thing's being a necessary condition of it.

In the present instance, Kant begins with the assertion that "I am conscious of my own existence as determined in time" (ibid.). This is a straightforward phenomenological claim about the temporal nature of our lives: we consider ourselves to be biographical subjects, as having a life-history, which entails that we exist *in time*; in other words, that time is an objective feature of our existence. Kant's second assertion in the argument is principally a condensed re-statement of a point that he makes more fully in an earlier subsection entitled "Analogies of Experience" (see the First Analogy, A182/B224 ff.); namely, that temporality (which cannot be perceived directly but is a necessary precondition of the *changes* we experience as occurring in objects) "presupposes something *permanent* in perception" (B275). This is so because changes cannot occur in abstraction from some *thing* (a permanent substance) that *undergoes* those changes. The thing, or "permanent", that underlies perceived changes cannot, Kant continues, "be something in me, since it is only through this permanent that my existence in time can itself be determined" (ibid.). In the preface to the *Critique's* second edition, Kant explains this point as meaning that the permanent substance "*cannot be an intuition in me*"—i.e. a sensory perception—since such intuitions, being representations of objects, themselves presuppose something permanent, "*in relation to which their change, and so my existence in the time wherein they change, may be determined*" (Bxxxix fn.a; original emphasis). It follows, Kant asserts, that my perceiving this permanent substance "is possible only through a *thing* outside me; and consequently the determination of my existence in time is possible only through the existence of actual things which I perceive outside me" (B275–76).

We might, then, paraphrase Kant's argument in the Refutation as follows:

- (i) We are aware of our existence as being temporally determined.
- (ii) This is so because we experience representations in temporal terms (i.e. as exhibiting temporal characteristics such as duration, succession and simultaneity).
- (iii) Time cannot be perceived directly but is presupposed in any experience of change.
- (iv) Change also presupposes permanence, i.e. a substance to which change occurs.
- (v) No substance can be represented in experience (since all representations, being temporal, *require* an unrepresented substance as their ground).
- (vi) Therefore substances must be "external", which is to say, they must exist in space independently of ourselves qua *empirical subjects*. And hence it is correct to say that we experience *things* and not merely our own internally generated representations.

The argument is controversial, with respect not merely to its validity, but also to how it ought to be interpreted. Some commentators have proposed that the position adopted by Kant on the

relation between representations and external things contradicts statements that he makes elsewhere in the *Critique*. Kemp Smith (1992: 313), for example, takes Kant's position in the Refutation to be a form of realism, according to which our outer representations are of genuinely external objects and are determined by them. This, Kemp Smith points out, is to be contrasted with the view that predominates in the *Critique*'s first edition, viz. that "External objects (bodies)," as Kant puts it in the Fourth Paralogism, "are mere appearances, and are therefore nothing but a species of my representations, the objects of which are something only through these representations. Apart from them, they are nothing" (A370). Other interpreters, meanwhile, have denied that the *Critique* exhibits a lack of coherence and consistency, and have referred to it as, for example, "one of the most single-minded and unified works in the philosophical canon" (Waxman 1991: 4).¹⁹ I do not propose to try to resolve the controversies concerning the *Critique* in general or the Refutation of Idealism in particular. But I shall attempt in what remains of this section to sketch some of the key features of Kant's philosophy, most particularly the "transcendental idealism" with which he has become almost universally associated.

It is in the first edition of the *Critique* that Kant explicitly defines his own position as a form of idealism, which he calls *transcendental* (or sometimes "critical" or "formal") idealism. In the *Prolegomena* he betrays some misgivings about his previous use of this expression, referring, for example, to "my formerly so-called transcendental, or better, *critical* idealism" (1997: 46); and in the *Critique*'s second edition he removes the passage in which "transcendental idealism" was most prevalent (namely, the Fourth Paralogism, at A366–405). He cannot, however, be said to have forsaken the philosophical position for which the expression stands, for the majority of the first edition remains intact, including references to the "transcendental *ideality*" of space (A28/B44), time (A36/B52), and appearances (A507/B535).

To anyone who has done as much as to glance at the *Critique*'s Table of Contents, it will be evident that Kant has a dazzling number of uses for the term "transcendental",²⁰ and he refers to the grand project for which the *Critique* is a mere preliminary as "transcendental philosophy" (A12–14/B25–28). In the context of Kant's thought it is important to distinguish "transcendental" from "transcendent" on the one hand, and from "empirical" on the other. Although "transcendental" and "transcendent" are clearly etymologically identical—deriving

¹⁹ Waxman does not make it clear whether he is here referring to the first or the second edition of the *Critique*, which fact suggests that he does not consider the changes made in the second edition to have altered Kant's position.

²⁰ For example, the two major divisions of the *Critique* are entitled, respectively, "Transcendental Doctrine of Elements" and "Transcendental Doctrine of Method", and under the first of these are included such further divisions and subdivisions as "Transcendental Aesthetic", "~ Logic", "~ Analytic", "~ Dialectic", etc.

from the Latin *transcendere*, “to raise (oneself) beyond”—Kant finds a distinct use for each of them. He retains the common usage of “transcendent” as meaning “surpassing all possible experience”, but redefines “transcendental” to mean “that which *makes possible*, and thus (logically) *precedes*, experience” (cf. Kant 1997: 128 fn.). Furthermore, whereas, on Kant’s view, that which is transcendent cannot be known (and hence any claims about it must be regarded as purely dogmatic), that which is transcendental *can* be known, by means of an enquiry into the necessary conditions of the possibility of knowledge itself. Since, for Kant, “There can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience” (B1), a significant part of this enquiry involves an attempt to establish what factors must be present in order for experience to occur. Having asked the question, one can then proceed, via a series of transcendental arguments, toward a knowledge of the sought-after factors *a priori*, i.e. “prior to” or “independently of” (any particular) experience.

The distinction between the terms “transcendental” and “empirical” consists in the fact that, whereas the latter relates to “that which is experienced or experienceable”, the former, as we have just seen, concerns “that which precedes experience as its necessary condition”. This distinction of Kant’s enables him to present himself as *both* an idealist (of a particular kind) and a realist (of a particular kind). He is—albeit more explicitly so in the *Critique*’s first edition—a *transcendental idealist* and an *empirical realist*. Transcendental idealism is defined as “the doctrine that appearances are to be regarded as being, one and all, representations only, not things in themselves, and that time and space are therefore only sensible forms of our intuition, not determinations given as existing by themselves, nor conditions of objects viewed as things in themselves” (A369). The distinction between the appearances of things (phenomena) and the things in themselves is central to Kant’s critical (or transcendental) philosophy. Kant never ventures to doubt the existence of a world of entities outside of human minds; but he denies that we can know anything positive about it beyond the mere fact of its existence. What appear to us in experience are representations of things, which representations are constructed, out of the raw material received via the senses, by our cognitive apparatus. These apparatus—comprising the two “forms of sensibility” (time and space) plus a total of twelve “categories of the understanding” (i.e. concepts that are applied to sensations or “intuitions”)—are, on Kant’s view, precisely what enable experience, and hence knowledge, to occur; and thus they can never be by-passed, no matter how hard we might try to reach the things-in-themselves that stand behind the appearances.

Kant is an idealist, then, in the sense that he holds that objects *as we come to know them* are always subject-dependent. He calls himself an empirical realist on the grounds that he re-

gards the objects of experience as real *from the human standpoint*. It is because we all share that human standpoint that "objective" (i.e. intersubjectively consistent) knowledge about the world is possible, although the caveat remains that such knowledge concerns only the world of appearances and not of things in themselves.

Kant contrasts his own transcendental idealism and empirical realism with the "transcendental realism" and "empirical idealism" that are exemplified in the philosophies of certain of his forbears. By assuming the extra-subjective reality of space and time, the transcendental realist "interprets outer appearances [...] as things-in-themselves"; but then, in view of the widely-held belief that our experiences are in some way or other mediated by our sense-faculties, the transcendental realist is obliged to acknowledge the ideality of the objects of experience, and thus becomes an empirical idealist (A369). Kant insinuates that empirical idealism is the precarious position in which Descartes, among others, finds himself, the only option being (unless one is to forgo belief in an external world) faith that the divine creator has ensured the faultless correspondence of our representations to the things they are supposed to represent.

Several commentators have interpreted Kant's critique of Descartes as essentially Berkeleyan, and such an interpretation is in my view largely correct.²¹ Both Berkeley and Kant try to refute scepticism by identifying material objects with our phenomenal representations: there is no epistemological gap that has to be bridged, they say, for the world as it appears to us is the only world we can know about—and we know about it *directly*. Where the two philosophers differ, however, is in their respective responses to the issue of how it is that all sane human beings seem to have representations of the *same* world. While Berkeley invokes the mind of God as an objective and supra-human ground for phenomena, Kant claims that our common human (though transcendental) constitution ensures that, although each of us plays a constructive role in the production of our representations, we each play an *equivalent* constructive role. (It is on this point that modern antirealists tend to differ from Kant, arguing that human cognitive apparatus vary in relation to historico-cultural and/or evolutionary biological factors.²²) Kant holds Berkeley's major fault to be the latter's failure to recognise the subjec-

²¹ Schopenhauer, for one, regarded the *Critique's* first edition as Berkeleyan in so far as Kant therein "declares the external world lying before us in space and time to be mere representation of the subject that knows it" (1966 I: 435). More recently T. E. Wilkerson has claimed that "at least two of Kant's arguments in the Dialectic [including the one against Descartes that we are considering] rest squarely on a Berkeleyan reduction of objects to collections of perceptions" (1976: 182).

²² Hilary Putnam's position, for example, has been described (by Alston 1996: 82) as an "updated, relativized Kantianism," according to which "anything we have beliefs or make assertions about exists and is what it is only "within" or "relative to" some "conceptual scheme" or "theoretical scheme" of human devising" (Cf. Putnam 1987, esp. pp. 20 ff). Richard Rorty also, like Putnam, holds that the *a priori* concepts which Kant ascribes to the understanding are historically contingent, and traces this view to Hegel (Rorty 1982: 3). The

tive origin of space and time. And since, on Kant's view, space and time are indispensable conditions for the appearance of any external object whatsoever, this failure necessitates the attribution of space and time to objects themselves. Kant regards such a position as absurd, presumably because it implies that our representations come into our minds pre-formed, and gives no account of how they arrive there. If pushed on this point, Berkeley would, no doubt, have had to resort to the Deity's omnipotence as an "explanation" of how we come to experience spatiotemporal entities; but Kant, regarding this as a retreat from rationality, dismisses Berkeley as a "mystical and fanatical idealis[t]" (1997: 45) who has degraded physical objects to "mere illusion" (*CPuR* B70–71).

In a brief summarial treatment such as this, this is about as much of Kant's philosophy as we can hope to cover. Several of the themes introduced here will re-emerge in later chapters (indeed, that is one of the principal reasons for their being brought up here at all); but now I shall turn to Arthur Schopenhauer, who, while maintaining a "sincere and deep reverence for Kant", was not afraid to point out what he regarded as the "weaknesses and mistakes" of Kant's philosophy (1966 I: 417).

SCHOPENHAUER'S CRITICISMS AND MODIFICATIONS OF KANT

Schopenhauer inherited from Kant the distinction at the heart of transcendental idealism, namely that between the world of phenomena—that is, the world as it appears in our representations—and the thing in itself. This distinction he considered to be "*Kant's greatest merit*" (1966 I: 417). He finds Kant's arguments for the distinction unsatisfactory, however, and in developing his own case performs some major surgery upon, and fires some sharp criticisms at, the Kantian philosophy.

The chief difficulty with Kant's assertion of the existence of things in themselves, which difficulty Schopenhauer was not the first to point out,²³ is that it is based on the assumption that the manifold of raw sensory material which constitutes the content of our intuitions cannot manifest spontaneously of its own accord, but must be derived from something outside us; in other words, every sensation must have an extra-mental *cause*. This assumption is highly problematic in view of Kant's firm conviction that causality is one of the categories of understanding; i.e. is something that the understanding brings to our conception of objects, and cannot therefore be legitimately attributed to that which is independent of all subjectivity

relevance to mysticism of the "cultural constructivism" typical of Putnam and Rorty (and exemplified in particular by Steven Katz) will be discussed in Chapter 7 below.

²³ Schopenhauer was preceded by, for example, G. E. Schulze in his *Aenesidemus* (acknowledged by Schopenhauer at 1966 I: 436; cf. Gardner 1999: 330).

(namely, the thing in itself) (Schopenhauer *ibid.*: 436, 502). Unlike certain other philosophers, such as Fichte and Schelling, who sought to overcome this problem of transcendental idealism by jettisoning the concept of the thing in itself altogether, Schopenhauer thinks it can be salvaged via a different route. He takes our awareness of ourselves as *willing*, i.e. as performing acts of will by means of bodily action (the body being the "*objectivity* of my will" (*ibid.*: 103, cf. 108 ff.)), to be different in kind from all other modes of awareness (*ibid.*: 110); the difference being such that, whereas all other awareness or experience involves a relation between subject and object mediated by the subject's perceptual capacities, the awareness of will discloses one's innermost nature, and along with it the innermost nature of the entire phenomenal reality (*ibid.*: 111 ff.). In short, then, Schopenhauer identifies the will (which has to be understood in an extremely broad sense²⁴) with the thing in itself, and effectively ends up abandoning his own oft-repeated principle of "no object without subject" (*ibid.*: 434; II: 202; etc.) by claiming that everything, including the subject of experience, is a mere manifestation, or objectification, of the will.

A secondary error that Schopenhauer attributes to the Kantian thing in itself is its supposed plurality. Kant frequently speaks of "*things* in themselves", thereby implying that there are several, perhaps innumerable, such items; but Schopenhauer points out that numerical properties can be ascribed only to things existing in time and space,²⁵ and that since the thing in itself always remains unaffected by these two forms—which apply only to phenomena—it cannot rightly be said to be multiple. Neither, strictly speaking, can it be regarded as singular; but since, in order to refer to it at all, we have to give it some numerical quantity, the concept of singularity is more appropriate than any alternative, as long as we remember that it is "not one as an object is one, for the unity of an object is known only in contrast to possible plurality" (1966 I: 113).

A further—and probably the most significant—criticism that Schopenhauer makes of Kant's philosophy concerns Kant's view of perception, and more particularly the role of the understanding (*Verstand*) in perception. Essentially, Schopenhauer regards Kant's view on this matter as deeply confused. In certain places Kant seems to elevate sensations to the level of perceptions, thereby radically under-emphasising the importance of the understanding;

²⁴"I have greatly extended the range of the concept 'will'. [...] Will used to be recognized only where it was accompanied by cognition and where, therefore, a motive determined its expression. But I say that any movement, shaping, striving, being, that all these are manifestations, objectivizations, of the will, in that it is the 'in itself' of all things, i.e. that which remains of the world if one disregards the fact that it is our imagination" (Schopenhauer, *Unpublished manuscripts*, I: 353 [written in 1816], quoted in Safranski 1989: 205).

²⁵It would be more accurate to say time and/or space, for numerical designations ("singular", "dual", "plural", etc.) can apply to items in a series that is temporal but non-spatial, and to items in an atemporal spatial environment, as well as to those that are both spatially and temporally conditioned.

whereas in other places he implies that the understanding is indispensable for experience, while characterising the understanding in an unduly complicated and intellectualised manner. Schopenhauer holds Kant's view of the understanding as a faculty concerned exclusively with thinking (i.e. conceptualisation) to be seriously mistaken, and maintains that Kant's twelve "categories of the understanding" ought to be dramatically pruned and reduced to one, namely causality. According to Schopenhauer, the sole function of the understanding is not conceptualisation at all—that is reserved for reason (*Vernunft*) (ibid.: 439)—but, rather, the "referring" of sensations to their cause or respective causes, by which is meant the regarding of each sensation as an effect of a sense-organ's coming into contact with some external entity. "In this way the cause presents itself in space and time (forms of pure intuition or perception) as object of experience," i.e. as a representation (ibid.: 444–45). A full assessment of Schopenhauer's revisions in this area would require a far more detailed discussion than can be provided here; but as an illustration of the advantages that his account of perception yields over that of Kant, we might consider the case of animal perception. On Schopenhauer's theory, no problem is encountered when awareness (or experience) of external objects is ascribed to non-human animals, for although the understanding is crucial for such awareness to occur, its being merely a pre-rational faculty prevents the need to endow animals with ratiocinative capacities. On Kant's theory, however, since the understanding is taken to be a *rational* faculty, there seems to be no way in which awareness of external objects can be admitted to belong to animals without also attributing to them the power of conceptual thought. Of course, there would be no problem if, as Kant seems to do, we were to allow sensations alone to count as perceptions (or "intuitions"); but as, in my view at least, Schopenhauer has convincingly shown the necessity of causality (i.e. the referring of sensations to a cause) in perception, Kant's position fails to account for the perceptual capacities of non-human animals, which capacities can hardly be denied to exist.²⁶

One additional point concerning Schopenhauer's view of Kant's philosophy should be made here, which is not so much to do with a criticism as with a difference of orientation between the two philosophers. It has become a commonplace—indeed, a cliché—to characterise Schopenhauer as a pessimist, whereas Kant is not at all regarded in the same way; and this difference stems largely from the men's respective attitudes to the empirical world. Kant appreciates the fact that we cannot have access to the world as it is in itself, but he does not conceive this epistemic limitation as necessarily problematic; rather, it is simply an inevitable consequence of our being the kinds of experiencing beings that we are in the kind of world

²⁶ Schopenhauer makes reference to animal perception at various places, e.g. 1966 I: 439, 448, 454.

that we inhabit. Schopenhauer, however, stresses the defective nature of our knowledge, characterising it as delusory and frequently comparing the Kantian world of "appearance" or "phenomena" (or "representation") to the Vedāntic concept of *māyā*,²⁷ which term, in Schopenhauer's day as in our own, was most commonly translated as "illusion". He views the world of experience as a trap to be escaped from, and as utterly pervaded by pain, anguish and suffering for all sentient beings, including, and most especially, ourselves.²⁸ Schopenhauer is perfectly aware of the similarity between these features of his outlook and aspects of certain religious and philosophical traditions of India (he explicitly mentions Buddhism and Vedānta, but he also knows of Sāṃkhya²⁹). And very much in common with such traditions he conceives of the final end and justification of existence as involving what he refers to as a "surrender" or "denial" of one's embodied nature as a willing and desiring organism, and a complete transcendence of everything we would ordinarily count as experience (see esp. 1966 I: 410–12).

This soteriological thread in Schopenhauer's philosophy will be woven into the discussion of kaivalya ("aloneness", "liberation") in Chapter 7. For now, however, we can leave this overview of realist, antirealist and idealist streams within western philosophy, and direct our attention in the next chapter toward the relevance—or lack thereof—of these terms to the philosophies of Sāṃkhya and Yoga.

²⁷ "Man [...] is captive to *delusion*, and this *delusion* is as real as life, as the sensory world itself, indeed it is one with it (the *maya* of the Indians)" (*Unpublished manuscripts* I: 104 [written in 1814], quoted in Safranski 1989: 202). Cf. e.g. 1966 I: 8, 17.

²⁸ "[E]ssentially *all life is suffering*" (1966 I: 310); "The ceaseless efforts to banish suffering achieve nothing more than a change in its form" (ibid.: 315); "as the phenomenon of the will becomes more complete, the suffering becomes more and more evident. [...] [I]n proportion as knowledge attains to distinctness, consciousness is enhanced, pain also increases, and consequently reaches its highest degree in man; and all the more, the more distinctly he knows, and the more intelligent he is" (ibid.: 310).

²⁹ For references to Buddhism and Vedānta, see e.g. 1966 I: 356, 381 ff. Schopenhauer comments on Sāṃkhya at 1974b II: 399–400.

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The Imputation of Realism to Sāṃkhya and Yoga

OWING TO THE CENTRALITY of debates about realism and idealism (and other forms of antirealism) in western philosophical discourse, it is only natural that these concepts should have also figured prominently in the encounter between western and Indian philosophical traditions. During the course of this encounter—which has taken place and gathered considerable momentum particularly over the last two centuries—the attempts to interpret classical Indian philosophies within a semantic and linguistic framework that will be intelligible to an educated western audience has led both western and Indian scholars to ascribe various forms of realism and idealism to those Indian philosophies. There is nothing especially novel or surprising about such attempts, for in certain respects it is merely a continuation of a common tendency to apply modern philosophical terminology to older systems, whether they be European or non-European. In the interpretation of ancient Greek philosophy, for example, scholars are generally quite happy to speak of the “realist” and “idealist” inclinations of certain thinkers, even though such terms were not available to those thinkers in the ways in which we now use them. Similarly, as was shown in the last chapter, it is possible to discuss whether Berkeley’s philosophy is a form of idealism or realism, despite his not having framed it in precisely these terms himself. As the discussion of Berkeley’s philosophy also showed, however, the ascription of idealism or realism to any particular position is not necessarily a straightforward task. Indeed, it could—and often does—turn out that, upon a superficial glance, the philosophy in question appears to be one thing, but after more careful scrutiny it is revealed to be quite another. Or that, in certain respects it is one thing, and in other respects something else. This was certainly the case with Berkeley’s position; and the chances of devising an overly simplistic, or perhaps even completely topsy-turvy, interpretation of a philosophy are, I think it is fair to assume, multiplied several times over when the philosophy concerned originated within a cultural context as far removed from the modern West as is that of ancient India.

The project of interpreting classical Indian philosophies in terms of western philosophical concepts ought not, then, to be taken lightly, but neither need it be viewed as a project doomed from the outset. Sanskrit, after all, is an Indo-European language, and as such shares a considerable amount in common with ancient Greek and Latin, and hence with the modern European

languages that derive largely or in part from those sources. It need not, therefore, be assumed that translation from classical Sanskrit into European languages is an impossible task. Nor should we take it as granted that the respective developments of philosophy in Europe and India have been entirely separate. Although definite evidence of cross-cultural communication is scarce, the significant number of parallels between certain aspects of classical Indian and, for example, Greek thought have long been commented upon by scholars who have a knowledge of both traditions.¹ Indeed, so marked are some of these parallels that more than one scholar has proposed that some communication of ideas between Europe and India—perhaps via Persia—must have occurred in the ancient world.² Whatever the historical facts of the matter may be, it would be as misleading to project an aura of unapproachable mysteriousness onto the philosophies of classical India as it would to treat them as immediately accessible and transparent.

I am not, therefore, of the opinion that the employment of terms such as “realism” and “idealism” in the interpretation of Indian philosophies is necessarily inappropriate. Such terms may in certain instances constitute valuable tools with which we can work to define the positions of Indian thinkers and systems in ways that are meaningful to ourselves (as scholars) and to a western audience. Other such terms would include “monism”, “dualism”, “pluralism”, “materialism”, “mentalism”, “ontological”, “epistemological”, “phenomenological”, and a host of others, some of which have close Sanskrit analogues and others of which do not. I am, however, of the view that it is very easy (and tempting) to impose a category such as realism or idealism upon an Indian system in such a way that places unwarranted limitations upon that system, and hence upon our understanding of its nuances, details, complexities, and perhaps internal tensions and inconsistencies. I hold, further, that such impositions have been unfortunately typical of attempts to characterise several Indian systems, and that this has created a great deal of confusion concerning these systems, and also concerning the philosophical terms

¹ See e.g.: William Jones 1799 (*Works* III): 236; Colebrooke 1873: 436 ff.; Garbe 1899: 32–56 and 1917: 113–37; Keith 1949: 75–77.

² Examples are really too numerous to mention, although to illustrate the point the following may be noted: the belief in metempsychosis (evident in Pythagorus, Empedocles, Plato, and Plotinus, amongst others); the Pythagorean doctrine of *five* elements; Epicurus’s assertion that “nothing is created from what does not exist. For everything would be born from everything without the need for seed” (trans. O’Connor 1993: 21; cf. *SK* 9, *SS* 1.78; cf. also Empedocles in Wright 1981: 172); and Empedocles’ emphasis on freeing oneself from “impurities [...] of birth” by means of asceticism (Tawney, quoted in Garbe 1899: 35). With reference to these kinds of examples, Garbe declares that “The *historical possibility* of the Grecian world of thought being influenced by India through the medium of Persia must unquestionably be granted” (1899: 38; original emphasis). Schopenhauer, however, claims to discern a significant difference between the respective life-goals promoted in ancient Greek and Indian philosophies: “The former (although with the exception of Plato) has for its object the ability to lead a happy life, *vita beata*; the latter, on the other hand, the liberation and salvation from life generally, as is directly expressed in the very first sentence of the *Samkhya Karika*” (1974b II: 313).

themselves. In many instances it would appear that the interpreter—whether western or Indian—is not sufficiently familiar and confident with the subtleties and semantic variations in the uses of “realism” and “idealism” to employ such terms effectively and in a way that is hermeneutically illuminating rather than concealing. The inevitable result is not only that a biased and possibly incompetent assessment is made of the system immediately concerned, but also that it is placed in a false relation, whether of compatibility or conflict, with other Indian systems, and hence that a radically distorted picture of the whole philosophical milieu is painted.

There are many examples of Indian systems that have commonly—and in some cases routinely—been characterised as either realist or idealist. The systems that are typically placed in the idealist category are, in the Vedic (*vaidika*) or “orthodox” (*āstika*) traditions, Advaita Vedānta (the most notable version of which being that of Śaṅkara) and, in the Buddhist traditions, Yogācāra/Vijñānavāda (most prominently associated with Vasubandhu). Those typically regarded as realist are more numerous, and include the non-Vedic Cārvāka, Jainism, and the non-Mahāyāna Buddhist schools, and, of the orthodox darśanas, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, and Pūrva-mīmāṃsā, as well as Sāṃkhya and Yoga.

Interestingly, some scholars have endeavoured to place the various systems into orders of rank that represent a kind of punctuated progression from the most pluralist, realist and materialist at the bottom to the most monist, idealist and “spiritual” at the top. Such an approach can be traced at least as far back as the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* of Mādhava (fourteenth century CE),³ and a version of it was promoted as recently as the twentieth century by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Both Mādhava and Radhakrishnan saw the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara as the supreme achievement of Indian philosophy, with the other systems representing less perfect stages of philosophical development. These latter systems may serve the purposes of persons of a more or less primitive intellectual disposition but cannot fulfil the elevated aspirations of the “strong-minded (uttamādhikāri)” (Radhakrishnan 1927 II: 770). Such accounts ought, I think, to be viewed simply as sectarian assertions of the supremacy of Advaita Vedānta over all other systems, rather than as plausible descriptions of a genuine intellectual evolution in Indian thought. Despite the fact that the actual historical situation is far more complicated than such hierarchical models suggest, a similar model has been employed by certain scholars in the case of Buddhism, with “Yogācāra–Vijñānavāda Idealism” being regarded as “the last

³ The *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*’s English translator, E. B. Cowell, writes in his Preface that “The systems form a gradually ascending scale,—the first, the Chārvāka and Bauddha, being the lowest as the furthest removed from the [Advaita] Vedānta, and the last, the Sāṅkhya and Yoga, being the highest as approaching most nearly to it” (Cowell and Gough 1882: viii; my square brackets).

great creative synthesis of Buddhism”, and as occupying a “position in that tradition [...] comparable to that of the Advaita Vedānta in the orthodox Hindu tradition” (Murti 1975: vii). There are in this case sound reasons to hold that the Yogācāra viewpoint was formulated relatively late in the historical development of Buddhist schools, but any implication that it therefore stands victorious as the crowning glory of Buddhism would be ludicrous.

A comprehensive investigation of the diverse attributions of realism and idealism to various Indian philosophies would undoubtedly prove a fruitful project. Here, however, our attention will be more exclusively focused upon Sāṃkhya and Yoga. I shall endeavour in this chapter to root out and examine the principal reasons for the remarkably widespread assumption that these two darśanas can legitimately be described as realist. The first half of the chapter includes a broad survey of instances in which such an assumption has been made, as well as a close analysis of a passage that illustrates the kind of muddled thinking which often accompanies the assumption. The chapter’s second half deals with a particular section of the *Yogasūtra*’s fourth *pāda*, which section is frequently cited as evidence of Yoga’s (and Sāṃkhya’s) realism. I discuss in detail the two most important sūtras in this section, and conclude that rumours of their inherent realism have been much exaggerated.

THE STANDARD INTERPRETATION OF SĀṂKHYA AND YOGA (AND SOME OF ITS SHORTCOMINGS)

Probably the best way of trying to understand why Sāṃkhya and Yoga have so frequently been assumed to be realist is to begin by outlining the main features of what can be regarded as the standard interpretation of these philosophies. Although there are inevitably minor variations between the versions presented by different interpreters, there exists a widely accepted set of core views, which can be summarised as follows:

1. Sāṃkhya and Yoga are metaphysically dualist. They hold that reality comprises two mutually fundamental entities (or “substances” or “principles”), which are most commonly referred to as *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.
2. *Puruṣa* is the principle of subjectivity or consciousness. Only in its presence can experience take place. There is a multiplicity—indeed, an infinity—of *puruṣas*, which in themselves are numerically distinct even though, since they are simple and devoid of qualities, they cannot be qualitatively distinguished.
3. *Prakṛti* is the principle of objectivity and materiality. It comprises three co-essential constituents or, more literally, “strands” (*guṇas*). When the strands are undisturbed and are in mutual balance or equal tension with one another, *prakṛti* remains unmanifest (*avyakta*).

When, on the other hand, they are disturbed and out of balance, prakṛti becomes manifest (*vyakta*).

4. The disturbance of the guṇas occurs due to the “presence” or “proximity” (*sannidhāna*, TK 20) of puruṣa, and therefore this presence may be regarded as a “catalyst” that stimulates or “excites” the guṇas into action, even though puruṣa itself remains passive.⁴ There was never a time, however, when puruṣa and prakṛti were not compresent, and thus the guṇas must be held to have always been active, although it is possible for the compresence or “conjunction” (*saṃyoga*) of puruṣa and prakṛti to end, and thus for an equilibrium to be established between the guṇas.
5. The manifestation of prakṛti consists in a series of “real transformations” (Feuerstein 1980: 32; Organ 1975: 211), which together form an evolutionary process. The whole of empirical reality—i.e. the cosmos or “world”—is produced by this process. By “real transformation” it is meant that the world is not constitutionally dependent upon puruṣa, even though it could not have manifested without puruṣa’s presence and, indeed, manifests solely “for the purpose of puruṣa” (*puruṣārtha*).
6. The “purpose of puruṣa” is twofold: it comprises, on the one hand, having experience or “enjoyment” (*bhoga*) of the world, and, on the other, transcending experience and abiding in a state of self-contained “aloneness” (*kaivalya*). Since experience is inherently dissatisfying and distressing, the former purpose must be regarded as subordinate and auxiliary to the latter.
7. The goal of kaivalya is achieved through the attainment of a self-revelatory discerning knowledge. For Sāṃkhya this knowledge is arrived at largely or exclusively by rational thinking, whereas for Yoga it is attained by means of supra-rational meditation (*saṃyama*, *dhyāna*).⁵
8. Although kaivalya does not involve any ontological change in puruṣa, it does involve the “dissolution” of manifest prakṛti into its unmanifest source, which (because the manifestation is “real”) can only be regarded as an ontological change.

With respect to the issue of realism, the two most important points in the above summary are numbers 1 and 5, although these cannot be considered in isolation from the others. Point 1

⁴“It should be noted [...] that *puruṣa* is not a direct cause of the appearance of the manifest world. The *puruṣa* is simply present, and this presence functions as a kind of catalyst in releasing the casual [*sic*!] process of transformation in the *mūlaprakṛti*” (Larson 1979: 173; cf. 191; 1987: 49). “*Prakṛti* is dynamic, self-efficient, and self-contained, but it is not self-sufficient since it acts only when catalyzed by the presence of *puruṣa*” (Organ 1975: 211). “[T]he development of *prakṛiti* can occur only through the excitation of *puruṣa*” (Reese 1996: 675). “It is the transcendental influence of *puruṣa* that rouses *prakṛti* from her slumber at the advent of a new cycle of creation” (Chakravarti 1975: 229). [My underscoring in all quotations.]

⁵I have disputed this supposed methodological distinction in Chapter 2 above.

is important because it proposes that there is something that exists in addition to consciousness/puruṣa, and thus may be regarded as an assertion of the *reality* of that thing, namely prakṛti. Point 5 pushes this assertion further and claims that not only is the metaphysical (i.e. non-empirical) ground of phenomena real, but so is the world of phenomenal items itself. I shall now say a little more about each of these points in turn.

The interpretation of the puruṣa–prakṛti dualism has tended to be heavily influenced by the mind–body dualism of certain western philosophies, the most paradigmatic of which is that of René Descartes. For Descartes, since a substance is that which requires nothing else in order to exist, strictly speaking the only genuine substance is God.⁶ However, as was noted in Chapter 3, less strictly we can regard as substances those things that depend for their existence upon nothing other than God; and this definition allows in, on Descartes’s view, *res cogitans* (“thinking things”, minds) and *res extensae* (“extended things”, bodies, material objects) (Descartes 1985 I: 210).

Interpreters of Sāṃkhya and Yoga are generally very reluctant to speak of puruṣa as a “substance”. This is probably because, in spite of the fact that expressions such as “spiritual substance” and “immaterial substance” have a long history in western philosophy, there remains a sneaking suspicion that “substance”, if not a precise synonym of “matter”, at least *implies* it (cf. Schopenhauer’s remarks quoted on p. 76 fn.3 above). No such qualms need interfere with the characterisation of prakṛti, however. To this, the term “substance” is freely applied,⁷ although far more common are expressions that involve “matter” or “nature”. The majority of translations of Sāṃkhya and Yoga texts, for example, render *prakṛti* and its synonyms by “primordial matter” (Jhā 1896) or by equivalent terms such as “primordial nature” (Larson 1979), “primal nature” (Suryanarayana Sastri 1948), etc. And in commentarial or critical literature written in European languages we frequently find talk of such things as “the Unmanifested or primal matter” (Davies 1894: 17), “primal virgin matter” (Zimmer 1953: 225), “primitive matter” (Garbe 1899: 10; Macdonell 1900: 391), and “sheer materiality” (Larson 1980: 307). All such terms are presumably intended to accord prakṛti the status of being an ultimate and self-existent substance in something approximating the Cartesian sense. Thus, although no interpreter would be reckless enough to equate puruṣa and prakṛti with

⁶“By *substance* we can understand nothing other than a thing which exists in such a way as to depend on no other thing for its existence. And there is only one substance which can be understood to depend on no other thing whatsoever, namely God” (Descartes 1985 I: 210 [*Principles of Philosophy* I.51]).

⁷“[Prakṛti] is a blind unconscious force, or rather a primal substance” (Davies 1894: 105 fn.2). “For Sāṃkhya the apparent subject (namely, internal awareness in terms of *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, *manas*, and so forth) is really substance (*mūlaprakṛti* as *triṣuṇa*)” (Larson 1987: 71). “Prakṛti is the fundamental substance out of which the world evolves” (Radhakrishnan 1927 II: 266). [It should be noted, however, that Radhakrishnan denies that prakṛti is to be regarded as straightforwardly “material” (ibid.: 261–62, 274).] Cf. Eliade (1969: passim, esp. 19 ff.), who frequently renders *prakṛti* as “Substance” (with a capital “S”).

Cartesian minds and bodies, the basic picture of a metaphysical- or substance-dualism is held to be common to both philosophies.

While discussing dualism here, it is appropriate to note that, in order to declare a philosophy realist, it is not essential to demonstrate that it is dualistic. Physicalism (or materialism), for example, is monist in the sense that it proposes that everything, including supposedly “mental” things and events, can in some sense be reduced to (i.e. explained in terms of) physical things and events; and yet physicalists invariably regard themselves as realists, since they hold that the objects we generally take to be external to our minds would continue to exist even if our minds (or brains) were annihilated.⁸

Conversely, it is not necessary for a philosophy to be monist in order for it to be idealist. For example, although Kant would not wish to commit himself to either a monist or a dualist metaphysics (as to do so would, on his view, be to overstep the boundary of reason), it is nevertheless possible to conceive of a metaphysics that combines an affirmation of the unknowability of the thing-in-itself with a denial that consciousness can be reduced to that thing. In later chapters I shall propose that this is in fact very close to the stance taken by Sāṃkhya and Yoga. But a good deal of background interpretive work will need to be done first.

The claim of Sāṃkhya and Yoga that puruṣa and prakṛti are co-ultimate ontological principles is not, in itself, a sufficient basis upon which to assume that these darśanas take a realist position. It entails, of course, that they are at least realist about puruṣa and prakṛti—i.e. that they regard at least these two things as real—but this is a very minimal sense of realism. After all, everyone has to be a realist about *something* (cf. Kirk 1999: 168). As Descartes pointed out in his Second Meditation (1968: 102 ff.), the very act of doubting the existence of things requires the existence of a doubter (and even if one refuses to grant this, the existence of *the doubt itself* cannot be denied); therefore a *complete* scepticism ends in self-contradiction. The minimal sense of realism that has just been attributed to Sāṃkhya and Yoga is not entirely trivial, however, since it is a necessary precondition for the more interesting kind of realism that is asserted in point 5.

What we have in point 5 is the assertion of an ostensibly more familiar form of realism, which consists in the claim that “the world”—which we have experiences of and thoughts about—does not depend upon puruṣa for its existence, but is produced out of unmanifest

⁸ Some philosophers have distinguished between materialism and physicalism on the grounds that, whereas the former stands for material monism, the latter admits scientific entities that are not strictly “material”, such as energy and natural laws (see e.g. A. D. Smith 1993: 225–26). I’m not convinced by this distinction, and nor, it would seem, are most materialists and physicalists, who tend to use the terms interchangeably and view their position as monistic. (Whether they *are* strictly monist is a question that cannot be pursued here.)

prakṛti via a process of material changes or evolutions. Arthur Macdonell voices this interpretation when he states that, for Sāṃkhya, “The world is maintained to be real, and that from all eternity; for the existent can only be produced from the existent” (1900: 391); and it is echoed in Mircea Eliade’s comment that “For Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the world is *real* (not illusory—as it is, for example, for Vedānta)” (1969: 9; original emphasis). The contrast with Vedānta—by which term is often meant, as in this last case, the *Advaita* Vedānta of Śaṅkara—is a relatively common feature of claims concerning the realism of Sāṃkhya and/or Yoga. A. B. Keith invokes it when he writes that “nature [prakṛti] is essentially other than spirit [puruṣa]: it is not, as in the Vedānta, a production of ignorance, but is as real as spirit itself” (1949: 89);⁹ and so does Anima Sen Gupta when, with particular regard to the “living being” (*jīvabhāva*) or human personality, she asserts that, whereas for Advaita Vedānta “It is purely imaginary” (the sole reality being “the undivided consciousness or Brahman”), according to Sāṃkhya the components of the living empirical self (such as buddhi, ahaṃkāra, etc.) “are as real as consciousness” (1982: 86). As one further example we might mention John Davies’ discussion of the Sāṃkhya view of perception, in which he notes that Kapila (whom Davies treats as responsible for the classical Sāṃkhya philosophy) “accepted our sense-perceptions as representing a real external world, which exists in itself, and not merely as a projection of our sensations or thoughts”, and adds that “The Vedāntist doctrine, that the material world is only *māyā*, or illusion, was not held by him” (1894: 103). Later in this chapter I shall draw attention to some statements made by Śaṅkara which show that he did not consistently hold the empirical world to be illusory; but for the time being we need to add some clarity to the claim that Sāṃkhya and Yoga regard it as “real”.

In the first sentence of the above paragraph I noted that, according to point 5, “the world” does not depend upon *puruṣa* for its existence. In a western philosophical context, it would be common to describe realism as the view that the world does not depend for its existence upon the *mind* (or upon our *cognitive apparatus* or *perceptual equipment*, etc.).¹⁰ In the cases of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, however, it cannot be described in this way, since what is meant by “the world” is not at all what is normally meant by this expression in western philosophical parlance, and neither of course is *puruṣa* equivalent to “mind”, “cognitive apparatus”, and so forth. This point is crucial, for it not only highlights the inappropriate and misleading nature of the expression “the world” when applied to manifest prakṛti, but also—as I shall show in

⁹ The quotation continues: “though it is only under the influence of union with spirit that it [prakṛti] evolves itself.”

¹⁰ Typically this would imply the *human* mind, but there is in principle no reason to exclude the minds of other conscious species or, as we saw in the discussion of Berkeley in Chapter 3, the mind of God.

the following two chapters—ultimately undermines the whole realist interpretation as it is generally formulated.

The expression “the world” can, of course, simply mean “everything that exists,” i.e. the whole of reality. In that case, with regard to Sāṃkhya and Yoga, it would encompass both prakṛti and puruṣa. In discussions of realism and antirealism, however, “the world”—as noted in the last paragraph—commonly stands in opposition to the cognising subject or “mind”. When we ask, in such discussions, whether the world is mind-independent, we are clearly not including “mind” within “the world”, for it would be unintelligible to ask whether the mind is independent of itself. Nor can we be including mental states, contents, faculties, etc., for these, too, could not intelligibly be thought of as mind-independent (cf. Alston 2002b: 1). When, however, Gerald Larson (or any other interpreter of Sāṃkhya or Yoga) says that “The *puruṣa*, which is consciousness, witnesses every level of the manifest world, and the manifest world does what it does because of or for the sake of *puruṣa*” (1979: 176), the expression “the manifest world” must not be regarded as excluding the mind and its contents. On the contrary, it must be regarded as referring *primarily* to the mind and its contents, and only secondarily to anything that exists outside it. For no serious interpreter of the darśanas concerned—even one who insists that everything to do with prakṛti is in some sense “material”—would deny that at least the majority of prakṛti’s manifest forms is psychic or psychosensory in nature; and a small number of interpreters, of which I am one, would claim that they are *all* of this kind.¹¹

Puruṣa, meanwhile, can indeed be regarded as consciousness, just as Larson so regards it in the quotation above. This assessment is supported by puruṣa’s being identified with *cetana* (SK 55), which is best translated as “consciousness”, and (at SK 19) with such states as “seer-ness” (*draṣṭṛtva*, cf. YS 1.3) and “witnessing” (*sākṣitva*), which latter term the quotation from Larson also alludes to. Yet puruṣa is clearly not the kind of experiencing subject that is normally contrasted with “the world” in western philosophy. Although many varied conceptions of such a subject exist in the western tradition, the most prevalent of these include its being complex and active, i.e. possessing a range of faculties (capacities, powers) by means of which it is able to engage with the world—to perceive it, think about it, and make voluntary decisions to act in it, often in ways that have ethical implications.¹² Indeed, in western parlance, “subject” and “self” (and in earlier times “spirit” and “soul”) have often been used in-

¹¹ Others who take some version of this view include Jajneswar Ghosh in his Introduction to Āraṇya 1977 (though noticeably not in his earlier *Sāṃkhya and Modern Thought* (1930)), and Braj M. Sinha (1983).

¹² “[A] self is conceived to be a subject of consciousness, a being capable of thought and experience and able to engage in deliberative action. More crucially, a self must have a capacity for *self*-consciousness” (E. J. Lowe, in Honderich 1995: 816, entry under “self”). Cf. Thomas Reid (1941: 203): “Whatever this self may be, it is something which thinks, and deliberates, and resolves, and acts, and suffers.”

terchangeably, or virtually interchangeably, with “mind” and “person”, thereby bolstering an assumption that the subject of experience must possess the kinds of properties that are typically attributed to minds, such as those of being able to undergo certain “states” (both intentional and nonintentional) and hold certain contents (perceptual and conceptual). Especially since Kant, it has been widely accepted that the mind (and hence the subject) must be *active*, as experiences and knowledge could not possibly arrive in our minds already fully formed. Whether one holds that one’s perceptual and conceptual knowledge of the world more-or-less accurately represents the way the world actually is (as in realism) or bears no resemblance to that world whatsoever because a spatiotemporal realm of objects cannot exist independently of an experiencing subject (as in idealism), it cannot plausibly be denied that our perceptions and conceptions are in some sense *constructed by us* (Berkeley’s suggestion that they are somehow given to us by God strikes us as naive at best, and meaningless as worst).

In Sāṃkhya and Yoga, however, *puruṣa* is neither complex nor active, and yet it is the “experiencer” or “enjoyer” (*bhoktr*, SK 17). Several of the capacities that, in western philosophy, have tended to be ascribed to the subject—such as forming concepts, making judgments, remembering things and events, initiating action—are, in Sāṃkhya and Yoga, placed very firmly within the domain of *prakṛti*. Even the very notion of being a self—an ego or “I” (*aham*)—is a function of the essentially nonconscious *prakṛti* (SK 22, 24). All that is left for *puruṣa* seems to be a non-attached, undiscriminating, bare “witnessing”. Indeed, it cannot even be held to properly *perceive* anything, since to perceive an object involves distinguishing that object from the world in general, and this distinguishing or discriminating capacity belongs to (or is) *buddhi*.¹³ In both Sāṃkhya and Yoga, perception (*dṛṣṭa*, *pratyakṣa*) is one of the three modes of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*), which is itself a “mental modification” (*cittavṛtti*) and thus cannot be attributed to *puruṣa* (see YS 1.2–7). It is therefore difficult to determine exactly in what sense *puruṣa* can be regarded as an “experiencer”. The term *draṣṭṛ*, meaning “seer” (the one who sees), is used synonymously with *puruṣa* in the *Yogasūtra* (1.3; 2.17, 20; 4.23), which suggests an ability to see or perceive in some way. And in that text, as well as in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, the whole process of *prakṛti*’s manifesting is said to be for the dual purpose of *puruṣa*’s “experience” (*bhoga*) or “seeing” (*darśana*) on the one hand, and its “liberation” (*apavarga*, *kaivalya*) on the other (YS 2.18, SK 21). But, as mentioned above, we also find in both texts statements that identify *puruṣa* with the more abstract quality of “seer-ness” (SK 19)

¹³ The crucial term here is *adhyavasāya*, with which *buddhi* is identified at SK 23, and which constitutes part of the definition of “perception” (*dṛṣṭa*) at SK 5. *Adhyavasāya* may be translated as “ascertainment” or “determination”. Cf. Zimmer (1953: 320): “*buddhi* is the faculty of what is known as *adhyavasāya*, i.e., ‘determination, resolution, mental effort; awareness, feeling, opinion, belief, knowledge, discrimination, and decision.’”

and “mere seeing” (*dṛśimātra*, *YS* 2.20, cf. 2.25), which terms imply an attempt to disassociate *puruṣa* from any *particular* experiences, and to characterise it as a kind of background awareness—something “within which” particular phenomenal events can occur.

The concept of *puruṣa* seems to require, then, that we distinguish between, on the one hand, the processes and operations that make any experience or cognition possible, *along with the experiences and cognitions themselves*—all of which fall within the category of *prakṛti*—and on the other hand, the fundamentally nonempirical (and hence transcendental) “pure subject”—the “subject that is never the object” as Ghosh puts it (1977: 2, 21)—which, analogically speaking, can be said to “illuminate” mental events, or to provide the conscious location in which those events can manifest (“come to light”), but which cannot be said to cognise them itself.

The view I have just proposed is philosophically provocative, for it suggests that there can be something we might identify as “pure consciousness” or “pure subjectivity” distinct from any *content* of thought or perception. It is also to some extent *interpretively* controversial, for although there is ample textual evidence to support a “pure consciousness” interpretation of *puruṣa*, there exist some important elements of Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophy (in addition to those recently mentioned) that militate against it, or at least muddy the interpretive waters. Principally I have in mind here the following two doctrines. First, the notorious *puruṣa-bahutva* or “multiplicity of *puruṣas*” doctrine (*SK* 18), which, by proposing that there are innumerable *puruṣas* individuated by their involvement with distinct spatiotemporal life-forms, seriously undermines *puruṣa*’s transcendentality. Second is the doctrine that the “combination” (*saṃyoga*) of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, which generates manifestation and experience, is itself the result of a primordial “misperception” or “deceptive knowledge” (*avidyā*) consisting in a lack of discrimination between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (*YS* 2.24–25). It might be thought that this absence of discrimination can be attributed to *buddhi*, but this is problematic for two reasons, one being the fact that *buddhi* is itself a manifestation of *prakṛti* (and thus cannot be held responsible for initiating the manifesting process), and the other being the fact that it is *puruṣa*’s realisation of its distinctness from the whole of *prakṛti* (including *buddhi*) that brings an end to *prakṛti*’s manifestation, thus implying that the critical locus of discerning knowledge is *puruṣa* and not *buddhi* (cf. *SK* 64–68). These are awkward points for any interpreter of Sāṃkhya and Yoga to try to deal with, and it may be that no entirely satisfactory interpretation can be arrived at. I shall argue in Chapter 7 that the apparent contradictions in the concept of *puruṣa* stem from a genuine tension in our very experience of being conscious, rather than necessarily from any philosophical laxity on the part of the darśanas concerned.

For now, however, we must postpone any attempt to resolve these difficulties, and instead cast our attention back to the issue of the alleged realism of Sāṃkhya and Yoga.

Enough has, I hope, been said to indicate that, if it is to be proposed that Sāṃkhya and Yoga are realist with respect to the manifest forms of prakṛti, this must be acknowledged to be a very different kind of realism from that which we most often encounter in western philosophy. It must involve the claim, not that the spatiotemporal objects of our experience exist “out there” in the world independently of our cognisance of them, but rather that those spatiotemporal objects *and our mechanisms of knowing about them* exist independently of what virtually all interpreters would agree is in some sense a pure, unconditioned “self” or “consciousness”.

Owing to the peculiar and uncommon nature of this philosophical position, one might expect to find frequent and lengthy explanations of precisely why the term “realism” provides an appropriate characterisation of it in the writings of those interpreters who regard it as so appropriate. Such explanations are not, however, to be found; indeed, what we come across instead is either a complete absence of explanation or else half-explanations that leave a high degree of ambiguity concerning the nature of the imputed realism. Francis Catalina, for example, says of Yoga that it “is a realistic, mystical and scientific school of thought”, and adds that “It is realistic in its insistence upon the reality of the phenomenal world and that a normal evaluation of the perceptions of the sense be made” (1968: 138). By “a normal evaluation of the perceptions of sense”, I can only presume that Catalina means an evaluation that judges these perceptions to correspond to objects that exist independently of them; which claim, combined with that of the “reality of the phenomenal world”, strongly implies that the realism being referred to involves the relation between perceiving subjects and an external world of objects, rather than that between pure consciousness and the psychophysical complex of prakṛti. Of course, many interpreters of Yoga believe that it *does* affirm the independent existence of physical objects in time and space, and they base this belief upon the contention that a string of statements in the fourth chapter of the *Yogasūtra* presents an attempt to refute the Buddhist vijñānavādin’s “mind-only” (*citta-mātra*) doctrine. I will come to this supposed “refutation” in the next section. The important point to be made here, however, is that the statement quoted from Catalina above leaves us with no clear understanding of what is meant by his assertion that Yoga is “realistic”.

A similar problem of ambiguity is exemplified in certain passages from the work of Anima Sen Gupta, who has written several books on Sāṃkhya and has contributed to the Sāṃkhya

edition of the *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*.¹⁴ It should be noted that Sen Gupta regards classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga as a single system, and thus when she speaks of one or the other it may generally be assumed that she is referring to both.¹⁵ (This accounts for the fact that, in the remarks that are to be discussed in the next section, she treats the *Yogasūtra* and its commentaries as representatives of classical Sāṃkhya.) “The philosophy of Sāṃkhya”, she declares, “is not merely a dualistic system; it is also a realistic and rationalistic system”, and then goes on to explain what she means by a “realistic system”:

A realistic system, as we know, is a system which believes that the object of cognition is different from and independent of cognition. In the opinion of a realistic philosopher, the object of valid cognition (*pramāṇa* [*sic*¹⁶]) is never non-existent or unreal (*asat*). It is only the object of an erroneous cognition which can be regarded as *asat* in some sense or other. (1982: 2)

As in the case of Catalina cited above, Sen Gupta is here talking about the relation between objects and our cognition of them, not about the relation between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* as correctly understood. Indeed, she seems, in the above definition of realism, to have completely overlooked the fact that, according to Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the cognitions and the objects themselves are on the *same side* (i.e. the *prakṛtic* side) of the dualism between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, and that therefore to discuss the relation between them is to say nothing about the role of *puruṣa*. Elsewhere Sen Gupta acknowledges the fact that the cognition and the thing cognised are both manifestations of *prakṛti* (or of the three *guṇas*—which amounts to the same thing); but she then goes on to confuse the issue more than ever by attempting to contrast the Sāṃkhya position with idealism. The passage is worth quoting at some length since it highlights the way in which the distinction between the *puruṣa*–*prakṛti* relation and the cognition–object relation is often blurred in accounts of Sāṃkhya’s and Yoga’s “realism”:

[The] *guṇas* [...] form the realistic setting of the Sāṃkhya school. Knowledge and its objects belong to the realm of *guṇas* which are totally independent of the *puruṣa*. An idealistic system holds that in the acquisition of knowledge, consciousness contributes every item and that the object of knowledge is convertible into consciousness. The classical Sāṃkhya, however, holds that the stuff of which the object of knowledge is composed is radically distinct from consciousness and is also independent of it. The whole world, therefore, rests on a principle which is as eternal and independent as the spiritual principle. Thus, according to Sāṃkhya, both matter and spirit are equally real, although matter, being an obstacle in the path of liberation, is of inferior value. (Sen Gupta 1982: 66; my underscoring)

¹⁴ Her most notable works include *The Evolution of the Sāṃkhya School of Thought* and *Classical Sāṃkhya: A Critical Study* (see Bibliography).

¹⁵ Often she uses the hyphenated form “Sāṃkhya–Yoga”, as in the following statement: “The Sāṃkhya–Yoga philosophy is perhaps the oldest philosophical thought and discipline that has come down to us as a sacred heritage” (1982: ix).

¹⁶ The correct spelling is *pramāṇāna*.

This is a very confusing passage, and I will not endeavour to unravel all of its tangled knots. The main thing I wish to point out is the highly ambiguous—indeed, multivalent—use of the term “consciousness”. For example, in the assertion that for the idealist “consciousness contributes every item [in the acquisition of knowledge]”, “consciousness” would seem to mean “the cognising subject” or “mind”. When, however, it is added that on such a view “the object of knowledge is convertible into consciousness”, “consciousness” is now being used to mean the cognition itself. (By “is convertible into”, I take Sen Gupta to mean “is reducible to” or “is (numerically) the same as”). This slide from one sense of “consciousness” to another sets a precedent for the further slide that occurs between the third appearance of the term “consciousness” and the expression “spiritual principle”. The third occurrence of “consciousness” could be read in either of the two earlier senses; and yet when Sen Gupta goes on to assert that “The whole world, therefore, rests on a principle which is as eternal and independent as the spiritual principle”, she has assumed a quite different meaning for the term “consciousness” in the preceding sentence, namely the *pure* consciousness that we associate with puruṣa, which is not at all straightforwardly equivalent to the sense of a “cognising subject” and is in no measure equivalent to that of the cognition itself. By means of this subterfuge (which is almost certainly due to philosophical carelessness rather than witting deception), Sen Gupta is able to show that the dualism between “matter and spirit” (i.e. prakṛti and puruṣa) is equivalent to, or at least implied by, a realist position concerning the existence of physical objects, when in fact, as I hope has been adequately demonstrated already in this chapter, the two positions are *by no means* equivalent. “Of course,” we might say, “puruṣa is *not* the source of cognised objects. It is perfectly incapable of contributing anything to such objects, since it is simple, aloof, and pure.” But—to reiterate the point I have been trying to make—this says *nothing* about the relation between the objects and the cognising subject, which latter principle may in some way *involve* puruṣa (i.e. as the source of “illumination”, which is “reflected” (*pratibimba*, TK 5) in buddhi) but which very definitely also involves the multiple capacities, or processes, or modes, of manifest prakṛti.

One major problem is that many scholars seem to look at the doctrine that the psychosensory faculties, in so far as they do not derive (“emerge”, “emanate”, “arise”, etc.) from puruṣa, are “independent” of it, and then assume that it follows as a natural corollary that external objects must be independent of cognition. As I think the above example from Sen Gupta shows, this assumption turns largely upon a muddle over the respective senses of “cognition” and “consciousness” in the context of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. And as I will show in the next chapter, it also depends upon a particular materialist interpretation of the relation between the

various modes of prakṛti's manifestation, which interpretation turns out upon close inspection to be thoroughly incoherent. My own view—which I shall argue for particularly in Chapter 6—is that there is no reason to assume that any of the manifest principles is an external object in the materialist sense, and that what is commonly taken to be the cosmological or cosmogonic schema of Sāṃkhya and Yoga is better thought of as a synchronic analysis of the cognitive capacities and forms (in a Kantian sense) that *make cognition possible*. As I hinted earlier, however, there is a reason (in addition to muddled thinking) why Yoga, and Sāṃkhya along with it, have been considered to be realist about external objects, and this relates to a section in the *Yogasūtra* which I shall now discuss.

YOGA'S ALLEGED REFUTATION OF BUDDHIST IDEALISM

It is a series of sūtras in the Kaivalyapāda, i.e. the fourth (and final) chapter of the *Yogasūtra*, that is commonly held to contain a polemic against the so-called *viññānavāda* of the Yogācāra school of Mahāyāna Buddhism (see e.g. J. H. Woods 1914: xvii–xviii, xl–xli; Leggett 1992: xv–xvi). This Buddhist school is estimated to have flourished in India from the fourth to the twelfth century CE (T. E. Wood 1991: ix), and is championed by such figures as Maitreya, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, and Sthiramati. It is particularly well known for its doctrine (*vāda*) that all phenomena, including what we ordinarily refer to as “physical objects”, are reducible to mental phenomena, which in turn are reducible to mind or consciousness (*viññāna*), and hence that “consciousness is the sole reality” (Chatterjee 1975: 45). It may thus be regarded as a form of “absolute idealism” (ibid.: xii, and *passim*).¹⁷

The series of sūtras in question begins at 4.14 and continues through to 4.22 (or 4.23 according to Woods 1914: xli). Although there is no explicit mention of the *viññānavāda* in any of these sūtras, the traditional commentators from Vyāsa onwards have taken them to be polemical in nature, and have used their commentaries upon them as an opportunity to express their own opposition to the *viññānavāda*. Modern scholars have, on the whole, accepted the traditional interpretation of the sūtras, and have used them as evidence both of Yoga's (and, indirectly, Sāṃkhya's) alleged realism and for the date of the *Yogasūtra*'s being not earlier than the third or fourth century CE.¹⁸ Regarding the latter claim, Woods proposed in 1914 that, although we cannot be certain that the version of the *viññānavāda* “attacked by the [Yoga-]

¹⁷ The idealist interpretation of Yogācāra Buddhism has been challenged by some scholars (see e.g. Kochumuttom 1982 and Lusthaus 2002). Such disputes, though of considerable interest in themselves, need not detain us here.

¹⁸ Keith, for example, asserts that “the *Yoga Sūtra* seems to attack the doctrine of the Viññānavādins, and [...] therefore it is probably not older than the third century A.D., and probably is younger” (Keith 1949: 66).

Sūtra must be the idealism of Vasubandhu”, the probability that it is “is great” (xvii–xviii). This supposition is based almost entirely upon the fact that Vācaspati’s commentary refers to a *vijñānavādin*, which Woods thinks is unlikely to be anyone other than Vasubandhu (p. xviii). Woods shows no sign of having considered the fact that, even if Vācaspati *was* referring to Vasubandhu, there remains no reason to suppose that the original sūtras also had this particular Buddhist in mind. However, notwithstanding what I would describe as the extremely sketchy nature of this evidence, it has become commonplace to assume that the sūtras are indeed criticising Vasubandhu.

As I noted in Chapter 1, Surendranath Dasgupta challenges Woods’ assessment of the *Yogasūtra*’s likely date, but not on the grounds that Woods has attached undue significance to Vācaspati’s commentary. Rather, Dasgupta claims that the whole of the Kaivalyapāda is an interpolation, and that it cannot therefore be used to place a limit on the antiquity of the other three chapters (1922: 229–30; cf. my other remarks on this issue on p. 31 above).

If Dasgupta is right, and the Kaivalyapāda is a later addition to the *Yogasūtra*, then even if it did contain passages that are pro-realist and anti-idealist this fact would not be sufficient to conclude that the Yoga darśana as a whole is metaphysically realist. Since, however, it is unlikely that the issue of the *Yogasūtra*’s textual integrity will be conclusively resolved one way or the other, it is worth asking the question whether the series of sūtras that purportedly argue in favour of realism do in fact expound such a position. Probably the most important of the sūtras to consider are 4.14 and 15, as it is these two that attract the most vociferously anti-idealist rhetoric from the traditional commentators, and which have been cited by some modern scholars as most explicitly exhibiting Yoga’s realism (see e.g. Sen Gupta 1982: 2 ff.). Let us, then, examine each of these two crucial sūtras in turn.

With regard to the first of the sūtras to be considered here, I shall begin by giving my own close reading before attending to the commentaries of Vyāsa and Vācaspati. I shall also include some discussion of the critique of the vijñānavāda that occurs in Śaṅkara’s commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*. This is in order to highlight the similarity between the respective positions of Vācaspati and Śaṅkara on this issue, and to thereby cast serious doubt upon the assumption that Vācaspati’s commentary expresses something essential or unique to Yoga and Sāṃkhya.

Sūtra 4.14 consists in the following brief statement: *pariṇāma-ekatvād vastu-tattvam*. A literal translation would be: “From the oneness of the modification, [comes] the ‘that-ness’ of an object.” Owing to the fact that the preceding sūtra (4.13) designates the “strands” (*guṇas*) as the “essential nature” (*ātman*) of those forms that are either “manifest” (*vyakta*) or “subtle”

(*sūkṣma*, i.e. not immediately perceptible), the expression *pariṇāma-ekatva* may be taken to stand for the unity or integrity of the modifications or transformations of these strands. *Vastu-tattva*, meanwhile, can be understood as the existence of an object (literally, its “that-ness”), but also as the essence or nature of that object (which we might call its “what-ness”). In order to comprehend the meaning of the sūtra as a whole, it needs to be noted that the process termed *pariṇāma* is that by which the irreducible strands are held to bring into being the modes, or manifestations, of the “seeable” (*dṛśya, prakṛti*). These modes, at least on my interpretation (which will be developed more fully in Chapters 5 and 6), are the very constituents of experience, i.e. the factors that, in combination with one another, produce phenomenal episodes that are presented to consciousness (*puruṣa*).

If the modification of the guṇas is understood as the process by means of which experience occurs, then to interpret *vastu-tattva* as meaning the existence of an object *independently* of its being perceived or cognised makes no sense. Only if *vastu-tattva* is taken to mean the nature of an object *as experienced* does the object’s relation of dependence upon the modifications of the guṇas become intelligible. In this light, the sūtra can be interpreted as saying that the existential continuity and qualitative coherence of an empirical object are due to the coherence and integrity of the factors that give rise to that object. There is nothing profound or surprising about this statement; it merely reiterates the familiar doctrine that empirical reality is produced by the guṇas.

Interpreters who have already assumed in advance that the sūtra is a statement of realism will, no doubt, object to the emphasis that I am placing upon the purely empirical (or phenomenal) nature of the products of the guṇas, and will simply reaffirm that, since these products ought to be understood as real material entities, and not as mere appearances, the sūtra amounts to an assertion of realism. Chapter 6 will, I hope, make it clear why I consider this objection to be misguided. For now, it must suffice to say that, on my understanding, the guṇas do *not* constitute a physical reality that exists independently of any experiencing subject. They constitute, rather, the co-essential and irreducible conditions for anything’s becoming manifest and, hence, the conditions of the possibility of *what appears as* an external and publicly-accessible domain of physical objects. Whether this interpretation is, or is not, found to be acceptable, however, now that we have some familiarity with the sūtra being dealt with, we can turn to what the commentators Vyāsa and Vācaspati have to say about it.

Vyāsa evidently holds that the sūtra asserts the object’s independence of the subject’s awareness or knowledge (*vijñāna*) of it. He refers to an opposing opinion, according to which physical objects are unreal in a way that is analogous to the unreality of dream images. The

view that Vyāsa attributes to his opponent is as follows: “there is no object (*artha*) that is unaccompanied by cognition (*vijñāna*); there is, however, cognition (*jñāna*) that is unaccompanied by an object, as in a dream” (*YBh* 4.14).¹⁹ This is, briefly stated, the view with which Yogācāra Buddhism is associated, i.e. that the objects encountered in consciousness, whether in dreams or in the waking state, are merely apparent and have no substantial ground independent of consciousness itself.²⁰ Vyāsa regards the position as untenable, a mere attempt to “conceal (*apahṇava*) the true nature of the object (*vastu-svarūpa*) [by asserting that] the object is a mere fabrication of cognition (*jñāna-parikalpanā-mātra*)” (*ibid.*). He does not, however, provide any arguments to support his objection; he merely declares that “the object stands presented as ‘this’ by its own power” (*pratyupasthitam idaṃ svamāhātmyena vastu*). Sen Gupta quotes this statement and elaborates it as “The object of cognition is always revealed in cognition as something given, as *idaṃ*, and such a revelation is due to *viśaya*’s [i.e. the object’s] own power of intelligibility” (1982: 3). This would seem to be realism in its most naive form, and merely begs the question how any cognising subject is to know that the objects of his experience are “given” or “revealed” to him in their authentic nature and are not, in whole or in part, constructed through the act of cognition. In short, Vyāsa has *missed the point* of the vijñānavādin’s position. What is still more important to highlight, however, is the fact that there is nothing in the original sūtra to warrant Vyāsa’s assertion. Indeed, the assertion seems to diverge from the sūtra’s insistence that the nature, or “that-ness”, of the object is due, not to its own inherent power, but to the integrity of the modifying activities of the *guṇas*, which on my reading are determining factors of the object *as experienced* and not as a supra-empirical entity.

Vācaspati’s gloss on Vyāsa’s commentary to sūtra 4.14, despite its considerable length, amounts to little more than the flat denial of the vijñānavāda that we find already in Vyāsa. According to Vācaspati, it does not necessarily follow from the premise that all objects are accompanied by an awareness (*vedyatva*) of them that the object has no existence other than its appearance in consciousness. The vijñānavādin’s proposal that a perceived object is nothing other than the perception itself is therefore, on Vācaspati’s view, a mere conception (*vikalpa*), which has no power to override our intuitive conviction that the perceived object exists independently of its being perceived by us. Neither Vyāsa nor Vācaspati (nor, indeed, Sen Gupta, who approvingly refers to both commentaries) denies the central claim of the vijñānavādin, which is equivalent to Berkeley’s observation that the existence of things is only

¹⁹ It seems to me that Vyāsa is using *vijñāna* and *jñāna* synonymously here, which is why I have translated both terms as “cognition”.

²⁰ See e.g. Vasubandhu, *Ālambanaparīkṣā* 6, cited in Chatterjee 1975: 45.

revealed to us in consciousness; they merely deny the famous Berkeleyan conclusion that the being of a thing is therefore its being perceived (*esse est percipi*). There is no subtlety in their argument; it consists, as I suggested above, in a crude and naive realism, which holds that, since the world *appears* to comprise a range of spatially-extended and temporally-enduring physical entities, it must *in reality* be so comprised. It is an argument hardly worthy of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, which systems, on my interpretation at least, are primarily concerned with the analysis and disclosure of psychosensory processes that underlie, as conditioning factors, our experiences, including our experiences of supposedly external, physical objects. So if the realist assertions of the likes of Vyāsa and Vācaspati are not to be regarded as genuine expositions of the original text—or if such genuineness is at least highly questionable—then whence did they derive?

It is well known that Vācaspati was something of a philosophical mercenary in the sense that he composed commentaries on several systems and was able to give at least a pretence of being favourable to each of them even where their standpoints are at variance to one another. He is generally held to have written eight major works (or seven if one regards his *Nyāyasucīnibandha* as an appendix to his *Nyāyavārttikatātparyāṭikā*), all but two of which are commentaries or subcommentaries. In addition to Sāṃkhya and Yoga, he commented upon Nyāya, Pūrva-mīmāṃsā, and Vedānta; and it is his subcommentary to Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* that constitutes his most extensive work, known as *Bhāmātī* ("illumination"). It is therefore evident that Vācaspati had a thorough familiarity with Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya* even if we cannot state categorically that he was a committed Advaitin ("nondualist") himself. With this in mind it is interesting to note the similarity between Vācaspati's criticism of the Yogācāra vijñānavāda in his subcommentary to Vyāsa's *Yogabhāṣya* and Śaṅkara's own assault on this viewpoint at *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* II.2.27–28.

A rudimentary form of realism is already staunchly asserted in *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* I.1.2, where Śaṅkara declares that "the valid knowledge of the true nature of a thing is not dependent on human notions. On what does it depend then? It is dependent on the thing itself" (trans. Gambhirananda 1965: 16).²¹ Then, at II.2.27–28, he engages in a protracted attack against the vijñānavāda. To discuss this in detail would be a distraction from our main purpose, but I shall summarise the most salient points.

First it should be noted that Śaṅkara, though hardly sympathetic to any rival school, can be said without exaggeration to have possessed a particular loathing for Buddhism in its several varieties, and to have seized any opportunity that availed itself to unleash his vitriol. Notwith-

²¹ *na vastuyāthātmajñānaṃ puruṣabuddhyapekṣam / kiṃ tarhi vastutantram eva tat /*

standing this antagonistic attitude, Śaṅkara provides a very fair account of the vijñānavādin's case. He notes, interestingly, that according to the vijñānavāda, although an external object may exist independently of consciousness, knowledge of the object cannot arise unless the object is presented in consciousness. We therefore, on this view, have no cognitive access to the object's inherent nature, but only to the object *as cognised*, i.e. as an appearance. It is on this basis that the vijñānavādin regards the object (as it is available to us) and the cognition of it as identical. What is of particular interest in this version of the vijñānavāda, as presented by Śaṅkara, is the allowance that it makes for the existence of things that are non-cognised or non-cognisable; in other words, its admittance of the Kantian distinction between the thing in itself and the appearance that arises in consciousness. The vijñānavādin's view is thus transformed from a straightforward ontological denial of external reality into a more phenomenological position, according to which the only way that objects are available to us is as phenomenal contents of consciousness and thus any judgement concerning the object "in itself" is precluded.

The important point for us here is not whether Śaṅkara's summary at *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* II.2.27 does justice to the vijñānavāda; that is a matter for scholars of Yogācāra Buddhism to decide. It is, rather, that in the subsequent discussion (at *BSBh* II.2.28) Śaṅkara ignores the distinction I have just referred to—i.e. that between an ontological denial of a thing and a phenomenological agnosticism about that thing's subject-independent existence—and simply imputes to his hypothetical Buddhist opponent the ontological denial while proceeding to counter this view with a dogmatic realism. This is of interest to us because it exemplifies a tendency that is exhibited by other critics of the vijñānavāda, including the Yoga commentators Vyāsa and Vācaspati.

Brahmasūtra II.2.28 states, with characteristic brevity: *na-abhāva upalabdheḥ*—"not non-existent, because of perception." Śaṅkara takes this to mean, as we might express it in modern parlance, that because perception is necessarily *intentional*, it must be directed towards an object that is external to itself, and that, therefore, to hold that the object exists merely in perception (i.e. has no existence "in itself") is a contradiction. "[I]t cannot be that the very thing perceived is non-existent", asserts Śaṅkara (Gambhirananda 1965: 419).²² But he is, of course, wrong; for there are many instances in which we readily admit to having perceived something *as though it were external to us* that later turns out to have been, in whole or in part, mental; typical examples being dream images and hallucinations. This is presumably why the vijñānavādin uses the analogy of dreaming, since it offers such a clear illustration of objects

²² *na copalabhyamānasyaivābhāvo bhavitumarhati*

appearing to us that, when considered outside of the dream, possess no detectable “external” ontological ground. At *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* II.2.29 Śaṅkara discusses dreams, and proposes that their difference from waking experience consists in their being subject to sublation. But this merely begs the question how we can know that our waking experiences are not to be sublated by some superior, perhaps yet unrecognised, mode of consciousness (which is precisely what is advocated in the *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* (e.g. 1.7, 14) of the Advaitin Gauḍapāda and in other works of Advaita Vedānta!). Again, however, despite the astonishing crudity of his own assertions and responses, Śaṅkara portrays the vijñānavādin’s case fairly:

Vijñānavādin: Well, I do not say that I do not perceive any object, but all that I hold is that I do not perceive anything apart from the perception.

Vedāntin: Yes, you do speak like that, since you have no curb to your mouth; but you do not speak logically, for something other than the perception has to be admitted perforce, just because it is perceived. (Gambhirananda’s trans. 1965: 419)²³

Śaṅkara accuses his interlocutor of talking of perceived objects “as though” they existed externally to disguise the fact that he too (i.e. the vijñānavādin) believes, like the rest of us, that the objects he speaks of really *are* external and self-existent. Śaṅkara seems to think it is enough that the objects we perceive as external should *appear* to be external in order for us to determine that they are in fact external; which is to say that our perceptions of external objects more or less accurately represent things as they exist “out there” in an objective spatiotemporal world. In other words, we encounter in Śaṅkara’s *Bhāṣya* the same uncritical espousal of realism that we found in Vācaspati’s subcommentary on *Yogasūtra* 4.14. Now, since the same basic viewpoint is taken in Vyāsa’s *Yogabhāṣya*, which text is generally held to have preceded Śaṅkara, it would be unwarranted to suggest that Vācaspati’s position on vijñānavāda is derived solely from his immersion in Śaṅkara’s works. However, the similarity between the viewpoints of Śaṅkara, Vyāsa and Vācaspati on this matter is, I think, sufficiently close to indicate that the latter two commentators need not have obtained their opinions from an exclusively Sāṃkhya–Yoga context. On the contrary, the realist response to the vijñānavāda would appear to have been common currency among various schools, and thus its occurrence in the Yoga commentaries need not be taken as strong evidence of its presence in the *Yogasūtra* itself.

Let us turn now to *Yogasūtra* 4.15, which reads: *vastu-sāmye citta-bhedāt tayoṛ vibhaktāḥ panthāḥ*. This can be rendered as: “Due to the sameness (i.e. continuity) of the object and the

²³ *na kañcid artham upalabhe iti kiṃ tu upalabdhiṇyatiriktam nopalabhe iti bravīmi bādham evaṃ bravīṣi niraṅkuṣatvāt te tuṇḍasya na tu yukty upetaṃ bravīṣi yata upalabdhiṇyatireko’pi balād arthasyābhyupagantavyaḥ upalabdhereva*

dividedness of the mind (*citta-bheda*), these two are distinct levels.” In some translations the expression *citta-bheda* is taken to mean a multiplicity of minds, and on such a reading the sūtra presents a version of the “experience of a shared world” argument for the independent reality of physical objects. That is to say, if the same object is experienced by several minds, the object itself must be independent of any particular mind (and therefore, necessarily, independent of all minds). Sen Gupta ostensibly accepts this interpretation, stating that “one and the same object can be presented to many buddhis or cognitions. So, the object cannot be of the form of any one of these cognitions” (1982: 3).²⁴ The terminology here is ambiguous however. By “cannot be of the form of any one of these cognitions”, I would at first assume Sen Gupta to mean “cannot exclusively belong to...”. What she then goes on to say, however, is that “one and the same object can arouse different kinds of cognitions in different minds. That which arouses different cognitions can never be of the form of any one of these cognitions” (ibid.). Thus Sen Gupta has managed (by, it should be noted, following Vyāsa’s lead) to interpret the sūtra as saying the exact reverse of what we might expect. That is, rather than its being the *sameness* of an (experienced) object in relation to several cognising minds that indicates the mind-independence of the object, this independent status is revealed, according to Sen Gupta, by the *difference* between the various experienced versions of the object (as occurring in or to different minds). The argument is incoherent since the conclusion does not follow from the premise. Why should the fact that several minds, or persons, have different experiences of an object constitute evidence in favour of the mind-independence of that object? Surely, what constitutes such evidence is the fact that, *despite* any (relatively minor) discrepancies between their respective experiences, the several individuals can all agree that they are experiencing the *same* object. Thus it is what their experiences have in *common* that is crucial, not how they differ. But even this commonality of experience—which is the basis of the “shared world” argument—is not decisive in favour of realism; for as Kant has shown, it is possible to formulate a version of idealism in which the sharedness of the world is accounted for by the uniformity (or at least profound compatibility) of the several subjects’ modes of experience (i.e. their cognitive apparatus). Therefore neither version of the argument imputed to *Yogasūtra* 4.15 is effective in establishing realism with regard to external objects.

The fact that the argument *imputed* to the sūtra is a failure does not, on its own, prove that the imputers have misinterpreted it. It could be that the sūtra itself is at fault. But if a close examination of the sūtra can unearth a more tenable meaning, then this would provide firmer

²⁴ Cf. Feuerstein (1979a: 134): “Patañjali’s position is that consciousness and objective reality belong to different levels of existence. He points out that the same object is experienced by many consciousnesses [...]” [It should be remembered that Feuerstein uses “consciousness” to translate *citta*, not *puruṣa*.]

grounds for discarding, or at least seriously reconsidering, the existing interpretations. So what is sūtra 4.15 saying? It is undoubtedly saying something about the relation between mind (*citta*) and its object (*vastu*); principally that these items belong to separate *panthans*. *Panthan* is a synonym of *pathan*, both terms being cognate with the English “path” and having, as in the case of this English term, the metaphorical sense of a more-or-less systematised approach adopted in pursuit of a desired result as well as the literal meaning of a pre-defined route or road along which one travels. In the present context, however, most scholars are agreed that *panthan* means a “way of being” or “level (of existence)”.²⁵ This meaning evokes a connection with sūtra 2.19, in which the levels or divisions (*parvans*) of the “seeable” (*dṛśya*) constituted by the *guṇas* are listed. It therefore comes as no surprise that the mind and its object should be designated as different “levels”, for it is precisely an awareness of the various levels of manifest reality that followers of Sāṃkhya and Yoga aim to cultivate. Unmanifest *prakṛti* and its twenty-three manifestations can be divided into groups or levels in various ways, and the way that is used in *Yogasūtra* 2.19 consists in a fourfold division. The way in which the classical Sāṃkhya principles are generally held to fit into this fourfold schema is depicted in the table on p. 64 above. Although it is not necessary to discuss the four divisions in detail here, I shall provide an outline of how I consider *vastu* and *citta* to be related to them.

Whether one interprets *vastu* to mean a mind-independent entity or an object *as perceived* (by a conscious subject), it can nevertheless be agreed that it must be dependent in some way upon the manifest modes of *prakṛti* and upon unmanifest *prakṛti*; i.e. upon all four levels of the “seeable” (*dṛśya*) listed in sūtra 2.19. According to the standard realist interpretation, the five “elements” (*bhūtas*), which are included in the fourth level (*viśeṣa*: “particularised”), are the immediate material causes of the *vastu*, while these elements are in turn “caused” by the constituents of level three, and so on back to level one, namely the unmanifest (*alīnga*) itself. My interpretation differs in so far as I regard the relation between the modes of *prakṛti* as one of conditionality rather than material causality. The elements, for example, are dependent upon the preceding modes in the sense that they could not exist without them—in other words, they are made possible by those preceding modes—but not in the sense that they are materially produced by or from them. Nor, in my view, are the elements properly material entities; rather, they stand for the *forms* into which sensory contents (*tanmātras*) are arranged in order for the subject to have experience of an external environment. This non-standard, yet far more coher-

²⁵ Woods, for example, has “levels-of-existence” (1914: 323); Feuerstein, similarly, has “levels [of existence]” (1979a: 134; Feuerstein’s brackets); and Prasāda has “ways-of-being” (1912: 290). Chapple and Viraj stick with “path” (1990: 113), as does Taimni (1961: 410), although Taimni also lists “way of being” as an alternative translation. Leggett’s “categories” (1992: 389) is somewhat different, but not inaccurate.

ent, interpretation will be presented more fully in Chapter 6. Here all that needs to be said is, as I have suggested already, that on both the realist and my non-realist account, the vastu is dependent upon the four levels of the “seeable”.

Now, with regard to *citta*, in the present discussion I have so far translated this term merely as “mind”. In certain instances the term can be considered synonymous with the “inner instrument” (*antaḥkarāṇa*) of Sāṃkhya, while in others it is closer to *buddhi* alone. Indeed, the traditional commentators tend to use *citta* and *buddhi* almost interchangeably. In terms of the four levels that we have been discussing, *buddhi* is the sole occupant of level two (*liṅgamātra*) whereas *antaḥkarāṇa*, comprising *buddhi* plus egoity (*ahaṃkāra*) and the organising aspect of mind (*manas*), must be spread over three levels (*liṅgamātra*, *aviśeṣa*, and *viśeṣa*). In whichever of these two ways we understand the term *citta*, however, it is clear that it must be regarded as belonging to a different level (or levels) than its object, i.e. vastu.

So if we ask again, what sūtra 4.15 is saying, I think some clarity has been added in the above discussion to what is likely to be meant by the statement that mind and object constitute “distinct levels (of reality)”. But this leaves unspecified the reason that is given for their being regarded in this way. The expression *citta-bheda* is inherently ambiguous, and I don’t think it is feasible to determine whether the author of the sūtra intended to refer to the split between the minds of separate individuals or between the different mental states in a single mind. *Vastu-sāmya* is less ambiguous (if we leave aside for the moment the question of whether the vastu is, or is not, mind-independent), and would seem to denote the spatiotemporal continuity of an object. Essentially, I think that what is being said is that, due to the fact that there is a general conformity between an external object as experienced by different minds at the same time (and/or by the same mind at different times), and yet the minds themselves (and/or the various mental states of a single mind) are evidently distinct from one another, the object and the mind that perceives it must be separate levels (aspects, modes) of reality. There is no reason why this interpretation should be controversial. What *is* (or *ought to be*) controversial is the status of the vastu, and hence we need again to ask the question that I have referred to above, namely: In what sense is the vastu dependent upon the (other) manifest modes of prakṛti? For the answer to this question, however, one must search *outside* sūtra 4.15, and therefore this sūtra cannot possibly be regarded as an argument for, or even a statement of, realism about external objects.

There is considerably more that could be said about the allegedly anti-idealist section of the Kaivalyapāda, but I hope the above discussion is sufficient to show that the interpretation of the relevant sūtras is by no means cut-and-dried. Contrary to the assertions of some schol-

ars, the sūtras themselves are not unambiguously realist, although a form of realism can be read into them if one has already assumed that this is their author's position. As we have seen, traditional commentators such as Vyāsa and Vācaspati do make such an assumption, but the eagerness of these commentators to besmirch the vijñānavāda and their general hostility to Buddhism (especially in the case of Vācaspati) ought to make us wary. It is likely that philosophical vendettas are being waged at the expense of accurate exegesis. In place of the traditional interpretations, I have put forward alternative readings of the two most crucial sūtras, which readings are in my view not merely *as* plausible as the traditional ones, but far *more* plausible; and I anticipate that this plausibility will be enhanced by the fuller treatment that my overall interpretation of the metaphysics and soteriology of Sāṃkhya and Yoga receive in the following chapters.

BLANK IN ORIGINAL

The Nature of Prakṛti

SĀMĀKHYA IS RENOWNED for its metaphysical schema of twenty-five principles (including *puruṣa*) and for the careful—some would say obsessive¹—attention that it gives to the enumeration of the individual components of that schema. Yoga is widely held to have added a twenty-sixth principle, namely *īśvara*, but to have otherwise adopted the Sāṃkhya model. At the heart of the schema is the claim that the whole of reality can be reduced ultimately to two co-fundamental principles, which are most often referred to as *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. The other twenty-three principles derive in some way from the “combination” or “conjunction” (*saṃyoga*) of these two co-fundamentals. The twenty-three derivatives are generally described as “products” or “evolutes” of *prakṛti*, which “emerge” or “arise” when the equilibrium of the three *guṇas* (the threefold constitution of *prakṛti*) is disturbed by the presence (*saṃnidhi*) of *puruṣa*.

According to the standard interpretation, which I outlined towards the beginning of the last chapter, the metaphysical schema amounts to a cosmogony, which is to say that it presents an account of the order in which the various entities that make up the cosmos came into being. Having been in some mysterious way “stimulated”, “catalyzed”, “intelligised” or “vitalised” by *puruṣa*’s presence,² the *guṇas* proceed to combine in multifarious ways to produce a succession of entities, beginning with the most “fine” or “subtle” and ending with the most “coarse” or “gross”. Since, on the standard view, *prakṛti* is a material principle, all twenty-three of its (or *her*) evolutes must also be regarded as material. The fact that most of them are patently mental or psychosensory in nature is frequently held to be unproblematic, as long as the multipurposed and conveniently undefined expression “subtle matter” is applied to them. The production of three-dimensional physical objects out of elements whose origin can be

¹ Schopenhauer, for example, writes that “A peculiar feature of pedantry and narrowness in the Samkhya is the system of numbers, the summation and enumeration of qualities and attributes.” But adds: “This, however, appears to be customary in India, for the very same thing is done in the Buddhist scriptures” (1974b II: 400).

² For examples of the “catalyst” analogy, see p. 101 fn.4 above. The terms “vitalised” and “intelligised” are used mainly by Sen Gupta, who seems to think that they are equivalent, as is evident from the following passage: “*puruṣa* is intelligising *Prakṛti* by its mere *sannidhi* so as to make Nature fit for the creation of this world. *Puruṣa* is not therefore becoming an agent: *puruṣa* is the principle of consciousness that vitalizes *Prakṛti* by its mere existence (1982: 84; punctuation slightly amended, underscoring added; cf. pp. 76, 132, 140). Larson refers to buddhi’s being “‘intelligized’ by consciousness” in a discussion of Vācaspati’s reflection (*pratibimba*) theory (Larson 1987: 82).

traced to the psychic factor of “egoity” (*ahaṃkāra*), and further to “intellect” (*buddhi*), is also accounted for on the grounds that all these things are material *in some sense*. They are material (and, of course, “real”), and yet they all dissolve back into unmanifest prakṛti when puruṣa realises that it (or *he*) is not of their nature.

It is hardly surprising that such a preposterous story—which tends to become increasingly incoherent the more closely one examines it—finds little favour among modern philosophers (whether in India or anywhere else) and is widely regarded as a mere historical curiosity rather than an account of reality that deserves to be taken seriously.

In the last chapter I challenged the realist assumption upon which the standard interpretation of Sāṃkhya and Yoga is based. In this one I shall prepare the ground for a radical reinterpretation of the metaphysical schema of these darśanas by examining some of the principal doctrines that underpin it. Such doctrines include (a) the theory of causation known as the *satkāryavāda*, (b) the supposed “materiality” of prakṛti, and (c) the analysis of prakṛti into three constituent qualities or “strands” (*guṇas*).

CREATION, MANIFESTATION, AND CAUSALITY

Sāṃkhyakārikā 3 distinguishes four kinds of thing, or modes of reality, on the basis of whether each is creative or created, or both, or neither. The four modes are as follows. (1) *Mūlaprakṛti*, the “root procreatrix”, is by definition creative, though itself/herself uncreated (*avikṛti*). (2) The seven principles referred to simply as “the great (*mahat*) and others” are both creative and created (*prakṛti-vikṛti*). It can be inferred from later kārikās that, in addition to mahat (which term is used synonymously with *buddhi* in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*), the seven principles are “egoity” or, more literally, “I-maker” (*ahaṃkāra*), plus the five types of sensory content referred to as the *tanmātras* (“that alone”, “merely that”³). (3) A further sixteen principles are merely created (*vikṛti*); which just leaves (4) *puruṣa*, which is “neither procreative nor created.” It has been remarked upon by several scholars that this fourfold division of reality bears an astonishingly close resemblance to a similar categorisation employed by the ninth-century Irish theologian Joannes Scotus Eriugena.⁴ The most relevant passage, from Eriugena’s *Periphyseon* (“On the Division of Nature”), reads:

The division of nature (*divisio naturae*) seems to me to admit of four species through four differentiae. The first is the division into what creates and is not created; the second into what is cre-

³ “[L]iterally that and that alone” (Digambarji et al. 1989: 25).

⁴ H. T. Colebrooke was probably the first to notice the resemblance (1873 [1st edn, 1837] I: 244), and it has subsequently been referred to by, for example, Schopenhauer (1974b I: 64), Radhakrishnan (1927 II: 274 fn.1), and Larson (1987: 635–36 n.47).

ated and creates; the third, into that which is created and does not create; the fourth, into what neither creates nor is created. (Uhlfelder's trans. 1976: 2 [I.441b–442a])

It is not beyond the realms of possibility that this aspect of the Sāṃkhya philosophy could have found its way from India to the royal court in France where Eriugena worked, since communications did exist in medieval times between India and Persia and, in turn, between Persia and Europe. But whatever the source of Eriugena's quaternary schema may be, the reason I mention it here is principally in order to draw attention to a further point in the Irishman's philosophy that might have a bearing upon how we interpret Sāṃkhya. The point concerns Eriugena's definition of creation as "self-manifestation [...], self-externalisation, revelation" (Moran 1989: 250), none of which terms suggest the kind of separation between a divine creator and his creation that is normally associated with Christianity. It is, I want to argue, this very notion of creation as *self-manifestation* that underlies the relation between the unmanifest (*avyakta*, *mūla*-) and manifest (*vyakta*, *vikṛti*) aspects of prakṛti, and it is the misunderstanding of creation as *productive causation* that has led to innumerable confused accounts of this relation in the interpretive literature.

The most pertinent kārīkās in this connection are numbers 8 and 9, which deal, respectively, with the imperceptibility of unmanifest prakṛti and the ontological status of its manifestations. "That", states kārīkā 8, referring to the unmanifest or "root-" prakṛti,

is imperceptible (or ungraspable, *anupalabdhi*) due to its subtlety, not its non-existence (*abhāva*). It is graspable (*upalabdhi*) via its effects (*kāryata*). *Mahat* and the others are its effects and are with-the-nature (*sarūpa*) and without-the-nature (*virūpa*) of prakṛti.⁵

As the kārīkā points out, unmanifest prakṛti is not directly accessible to us, but can be "grasped"—i.e. inferred to exist—due to the presence of its "effects". The relation between these effects and their underlying "cause" should not, in my view, be understood too rigidly here. It is routinely taken, by both traditional commentators and their modern counterparts, to be a relation of *material causality*, which seems to me to be highly misleading. The sorts of analogies that are commonly used include the relations between such things as cloth and its threads, sesame oil and the seeds from which it is pressed, rice grains and the stalks from which they are obtained by threshing, and so on; none of which seems particularly helpful for elucidating the case under immediate consideration.⁶ A further analogy of this kind concerns

⁵ *saukṣmyāt tad anupalabdhir nābhāvāt kāryatas tad upalabdheḥ / mahadādi tac ca kāryaṃ prakṛtisarūpaṃ virūpaṃ ca ||*

⁶ These analogies can all be found in, for example, *TK* 9.

the relation between a jar and the clay from which it is made, and this is exemplified well in the following passage:

A lump of clay is shaped by the potter as a jar. Here nothing that did not exist before comes into existence, but there is only change of position in space of the particles of the stuff. Any one who could see the clay in minute portions will see that those portions are only rearranged in a particular manner in the jar. But those who see the whole and are familiar with the use of a jar, will call it a jar and in common parlance may say that a thing that was not in existence before has come into existence. In reality, however, there is only a spread of the mass of clay in a particular manner.⁷

The main problem with analogies such as this is that they describe a relation between two manifest spatiotemporal objects, one of which derives from the other in some way due to the intervention of a conscious agent. The lump of clay, for example, is not an unmanifest jar—it is simply a lump of clay, which can be formed *into* a jar only by the intentional action of a potter. In the case of prakṛti and its effects, however, we are concerned with the relation between something that is *unmanifest* on the one hand, and its manifestation or *appearance* on the other. The clay-jar analogy is helpful only if we consider that the jar is still, in a certain sense, a lump of clay. Independently of our knowledge of what a jar is, and what we can do with it, it remains nothing other than such a lump. To this extent the analogy can begin to characterise the prakṛti–effect relation, but it is a very limited extent.

The crucial point with regard to prakṛti is that it is not, in itself, a manifest object existing in time and space. It is defined as being the *opposite* of that which is, among other things, “caused (*hetumat*), non-eternal (*anitya*), non-pervasive (*avyāpin*), [and] active (*sakriyā*)” (SK 10), which I take to mean that it is:

- (a) unconditioned;
- (b) eternal (in the sense of being *atemporal*, not of being continuously enduring or “everlasting”);⁸
- (c) non-spatial (i.e. without dimensions);
- (d) inactive.

Therefore no comparison or analogy between it and something manifest can do justice to the nature of prakṛti. It becomes manifest only in the presence (*saṃnidhi*) of, or in conjunction

⁷ This passage is part of an explanation of *satkāryavāda* in an “Explanation of Technical Terms” (Āraṇya 1977: 27). The passage was probably written by Āraṇya’s translator and editor, Jajneswar Ghosh, although based on Āraṇya’s own views.

⁸ This reading of the opposite of *anitya* as “atemporal” (rather than “everlasting”), and of the opposite of *vyāpin* as “non-spatial” (rather than “non-pervasive”), is not particularly controversial, although certain interpreters prefer to qualify it by saying, for example, that unmanifest prakṛti is “outside of *ordinary* space and time” (Larson 1987: 49; emphasis added).

(*saṃyoga*) with, *puruṣa*; and thus if anything is to be regarded as the “cause” of prakṛti’s manifestation it is this presence, albeit not an active or efficient cause in the way that the potter who turns the clay into a jar is active. It would seem, to me at least, to be more plausible to say that prakṛti is not “turned into” anything; it is merely the case that in the presence of consciousness prakṛti has an appearance, a form, and can thus be said to *manifest*, whereas in the absence of consciousness—or “in itself”—prakṛti has no appearance, and remains unmanifest.

The so-called “effects”, therefore, are more correctly termed “manifestations” or “manifest principles (or modes, etc.)”. The term *tattva* is frequently used in secondary literature to refer to these principles but there is no unambiguous precedent for this in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* or *Yogasūtra*. The manifest principles might be said to have a particular quality of *tattva* (“thatness” or “such-ness”)—i.e. the quality of being the things that they are—but I consider it misleading to refer to the principles themselves as *tattvas*, because there is no indication that this is the meaning of the term in the passages where it occurs.⁹

The existence of the manifest principles is thoroughly contingent upon the compresence of *puruṣa* and prakṛti, and it is this precarious conditionality that I think the ostensibly paradoxical last line of *kārikā* 8 is grappling with: the manifest principles are similar to unmanifest prakṛti in so far as they share its “nature” (*rūpa*),¹⁰ but are dissimilar in so far as, by definition, they are manifest and it is not. This issue of the relation between manifest and unmanifest prakṛti parallels to some extent that of the relation between the appearance and the thing-in-itself in Kant’s philosophy.¹¹ It cannot, strictly speaking, be a relation of causation—with unmanifest prakṛti being the “cause” of its own manifest forms—for causation implies temporal succession, and that which is unmanifest stands “outside” time. And yet there is certainly a sense in which the manifest forms are profoundly and inescapably *dependent* upon their unmanifest ground. It is, in my view, due to this relation of dependency or conditionality that the author of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* uses the terms “cause” (*kāraṇa*) and “effect” (*kārya*) interchangeably with “unmanifest” (*avyakta*) and “manifest” (*vyakta*).

⁹ *Tattva* in fact occurs only once in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and only twice in the *Yogasūtra*. The expression *tattva-abhyāsa* (“sustained practice of thatness”) at SK 64 is almost identical to the *eka-tattva-abhyāsa* (“sustained practice of a single thatness”) at YS 1.32. It is evident from the context in which these expressions occur that they refer to some kind of soteriologically-oriented meditative discipline, but little more can be said with certainty. The other sūtra in which *tattva* appears is 4.14, which was discussed in Chapter 4.

¹⁰ *Rūpa* can also be translated as “form”, although this would have to be understood very loosely when applied to unmanifest prakṛti, since something that is unmanifest cannot, strictly speaking, have a form. “Nature” is, therefore, a preferable translation in the present context.

¹¹ Relevant here is the criticism of Kant, voiced by Schopenhauer and others, that his attribution of causation to the thing-in-itself is incompatible with his view that causality is a category of the understanding. (This was discussed briefly in Chapter 3 above, pp. 92–93.)

Kārikā 9 is commonly regarded as “the locus classicus for the *satkāryavāda*” (Halbfass 1992: 56), this being the so-called “theory of the pre-existent effect”. The standard view is that the kārikā outlines a theory of causation, according to which an effect constitutes not a novel creation but merely a realisation or objectification of something that already existed *potentially* in its cause.¹² Such a theory would be plausible, of course, only if the notion of cause were restricted to *material* cause.¹³ One could propose, for example, that a jar exists “potentially” in a lump of clay as one of the clay’s *possibilities*; that is, the clay has the potential to take the form of a jar under specific circumstances. It would be far less plausible—and perhaps unintelligible—to suggest that the jar exists “potentially” *in the potter* (or even, more precisely, *in the action of the potter*). The potter’s action is the occasion for the clay’s becoming (actualising its potential to be) a jar, but it makes no sense to call it itself a potential jar. And for reasons such as this the *satkāryavāda* is indeed normally taken to be a theory of *material* causation.

There is some textual justification for this reading, notably the occurrence of the expression *upādāna-grahaṇāt* among the reasons given for holding the *satkārya* view in kārikā 9. “Material cause” is one of the meanings of *upādāna*, although curiously the word’s etymological derivation is *upā-√dā*, “to appropriate to oneself” (cf. MW: 213). *Grahaṇa* means “to grasp”, both literally and figuratively; and hence the expression as a whole can be translated as: “because a material cause is ‘taken’.” Larson’s translation reads “because of the need for an (appropriate) material cause” (1979: 258), which is very loose. Suryanarayana is a little closer to the mark with “since there is recourse to the (appropriate) material cause” (1948: 23), but when one reads his explanation of the kārikā it is clear that his translation has been influenced in a particular direction by Gauḍapāda’s commentary. Gauḍapāda takes *upādāna-grahaṇa* to refer to the sort of selecting process someone engages in when choosing milk rather than, say, water in order to make yoghurt. This accounts for Suryanarayana’s insertion of the word “appropriate”, which is not warranted by the original Sanskrit. Larson presumably shares this interpretation since he makes the same insertion. If it was really this kind of selection that the author of the kārikā had in mind, however, then it would be a peculiar argument to put forward in the present context. It should be remembered that the passage follows on from kārikā 8, which we have just been examining and which asserts the knowability of *prakṛti* via its manifest “effects”. In this light, kārikā 9 would make more sense if it were un-

¹² “Causation as *Satkāryavāda* (the theory that the effect potentially exists before it is generated by the movement of the cause) [...]” (Dasgupta 1922: 257). “[T]he theory that the effect preexists in the cause in a potential state (*satkāryavāda*)” (Larson 1987: 43).

¹³ “The effect is in the material cause in a latent form” (Organ 1975: 212).

derstood to be elaborating why or how it should be the case that prakṛti can be known (i.e. known to exist) in this way, rather than as proposing reasons or arguments for holding that effects “pre-exist” in their (respective) material causes, which is how it has typically been taken. My own understanding of *upādāna-grahaṇa* is that it constitutes an observation about human psychology, not a claim about the objective necessity of causes. It is not so much that there is a “need” for a cause, but rather that we, *qua* human subjects, are predisposed to assume the existence of one: we “grasp” (*grahaṇa*) the cause in the sense of taking there to be one. This reading will perhaps sound more tenable if I explain my interpretation of the expression *satkārya* itself.

Satkārya, as I have noted already, is generally, in fact these days almost universally, translated as either “existent effect” or “pre-existent effect”. There is, however, an alternative rendering of the expression, and this was suggested by John Davies, who was writing in the late nineteenth century, before the now standard reading acquired such inert unquestionability. “The phrase [*satkārya*]”, Davies writes,

does not mean ‘an existent effect,’ but that what is formally existent is necessarily an effect. Causality is implied as an absolute condition of all formal being. *Asadakaraṇāt* (literally from non-existence, non-cause) implies that there is an identity in the terms non-existence and non-cause, and that we cannot conceive of formal existence as uncaused: only the unformed *Prakṛiti* (Nature) is without a cause, having existed eternally. (1894: 30; my underscoring)

On this interpretation, then, *satkārya* can be rendered as “that which is [formally] existent (*sat*) is an effect (*kārya*),” which assertion implies that whatever is encountered as manifest (and only that which is manifest *can* be encountered) must have a cause. Although Davies doesn’t quite spell out its Kantian implications, the remark that “we cannot conceive of formal existence as uncaused” places causality very firmly within the subjective domain, i.e. as something that is supplied *a priori* by the experiencing subject whether it is or is not an intrinsic feature of the objects themselves.

Again, however, we should pause to remind ourselves that it is not a cause in any straightforward sense that is being talked about here. Rather, it is the unmanifest ground of the manifest principles. And neither is the sense in which these latter principles are “manifest” a straightforward one. As I shall argue in the next chapter, the principles are best understood as components in a synchronic schematic of the necessary preconditions of experience, the soteriological project of Yoga being to reveal, firstly, the dependence of these very preconditions upon prakṛti and puruṣa, and secondly the total unconditionality of puruṣa itself. The part that the Sāṃkhya philosophy, and kārikā 9 in particular, seem to be playing in that project is to propose that anything which is manifest must, logically, have an unmanifest counterpart (or

aspect or ground). “Logically” can here be taken primarily to mean “conceptually”, which is to say that it is impossible for us to think of manifest entities and events as ungrounded. The terseness of exposition and absence of any elaboration of arguments in the classical texts leaves it uncertain, however, whether Sāṃkhya and Yoga drew a distinction between that which is apodictic (i.e. impossible to conceive as not existing or not being the case) and that which is *in fact* the case. Although the emphasis of kārikā 9—at least as Davies and I read it—is upon the conceptual possibilities of empirical subjects, it would be unwarranted to assume that a metaphysical claim is not also being made, this claim being that prakṛti is *in fact* the ground that underlies the manifest principles. Whether the claim is purely logical or both logical and metaphysical, however, we can be sure that Sāṃkhya and Yoga regarded prakṛti as being *in itself* non-empirical—i.e. as standing outside our range of experience—and hence this is one of the points upon which these darśanas come closest to coinciding with Kant, although their insistence that prakṛti can be known to comprise three particular tendencies or qualities (*guṇas*)—and that it must possess these qualities if it is to have a manifest aspect at all—differs somewhat from Kant’s contention that nothing positive can be known about the thing-in-itself.

In the favour of the interpretation of kārikā 9 proposed above—according to which it is seen as a kind of transcendental argument for the existence of prakṛti—is the fact that it lends the kārikā a good deal more coherence and continuity with the immediately preceding kārikā than it would otherwise have; and these are features that tend to be lacking as much in the traditional commentaries as they do in more recent exegetical studies. Furthermore, and equally importantly, it absolves classical Sāṃkhya of the extremely implausible and barely intelligible metaphysical claim that effects pre-exist in their causes.

PRAKṚTI AND MATERIALITY

I have been talking above about prakṛti as the “unmanifest ground” of the manifest principles, and have tried to steer away from the insinuation that this ground is *material* in nature. I am in agreement with Dan Lusthaus that “matter” is an inappropriate translation of *prakṛti* in the context of Sāṃkhya (and Yoga),¹⁴ but at the same time I am aware of the severe difficulties involved in avoiding at least the implication of its being a material principle. Since puruṣa can be defined as empty or “pure” consciousness, it must be prakṛti that provides the content—and

¹⁴ “[*Prakṛti*] is often mistranslated as ‘matter’ or ‘nature’—in non-Sāṃkhyan usage it does mean ‘essential nature’—but that detracts from the heavy Sāṃkhyan stress on *prakṛti*’s cognitive, mental, psychological and sensorial activities” (Lusthaus 1998: 463).

hence in a very broad sense the “matter”—of experience. Although “content” need not imply *physicality* (think, for example, of the content of a thought or a dream, or a novel), the danger of speaking of prakṛti as representing matter in this broad sense is that it inevitably gets tangled up with the scientific usage of the term to denote the physical stuff—divisible into microscopic particles—of which the whole material universe is composed, and to which (at least from the reductive materialist standpoint) every existent thing can be reduced. Some scholars have added considerable confusion to the interpretation of prakṛti by suggesting that its three co-essential components can be compared with certain particles conceptualised in modern physics, such as atoms or the sub-atomic constituents thereof.¹⁵ Responsibility for such misguided speculations must in part be apportioned to Vijñānabhikṣu, who sought to distinguish the guṇas as conceived by Sāṃkhya from those of the Vaiśeṣika darśana by referring to the former as “substances” (*dravyas*),¹⁶ but this hardly excuses the flagrant misappropriation of scientific concepts by modern scholars.

Several modern exegetes have expressed uneasiness about using terms such as “matter” and “material” with reference to prakṛti, and yet in most instances, probably due in large measure to the strength of their realist assumptions, they have gone ahead and used them all the same. Radhakrishnan is a slight exception in so far as he prefers the term “substance” or “fundamental substance” (1927 II: 266), and declares that prakṛti “is not a material substance” since it “gives rise not only to the five elements of the material universe, but also to the psychical” (ibid.: 274). But Radhakrishnan fails to provide any account of what a non-material substance might be, and therefore his use of “substance” instead of “matter” amounts more to a merely verbal difference than to a clear conceptual one.

Larson is quite open about the difficulty he has had in finding an adequate translation of *prakṛti* in its unmanifest aspect. “It cannot be characterized as ‘stuff,’” he reflects, “for such a notion, whether understood as subtle or gross ‘stuff,’ can only arise when *puruṣa* is present. [...] The usual translations such as ‘nature’ or ‘matter’ are useful as general designations, so long as they are not confused with our Western notions of nature and matter, which frequently

¹⁵ “Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to compare the *guṇas* with the atoms of modern nuclear physics, which are described as localisations of fields” (Feuerstein 1980: 35). “The *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* *guṇas* of this ancient system of thought [i.e. Sāṃkhya–Yoga] are *essentially similar* to the current concepts of the proton, electron, and neutron” (Catalina 1968: 127; square brackets and emphasis added).

¹⁶ *SPBh* 1.61: “*Sattva* and the others [i.e. *rajas* and *tamas*] are substances, not specific qualities, for they combine and separate, and [themselves possess] levity, mobility, heaviness and other such qualities” (*sattvādīni dravyāṇi na vaiśeṣikā guṇāḥ saṃyogavibhāgavattvāt laghutvacalatvagurutvādidharmakatvāc ca*). Cf. *YV* 2.18.

imply more than the Sāṃkhya notion would allow” (1979: 167; emphasis added).¹⁷ Larson finally proposes an expression that even he finds “awkward”, namely “‘an undifferentiated plenitude of being’ [...]—i.e. the simple fact or presence of being apart from consciousness” (ibid.). Such reflections do not prevent him, however, from making liberal use of such phrases as “primordial nature” and “primordial materiality” in his major published works on Sāṃkhya (i.e. 1979, 1987), nor from asserting elsewhere that “The notion of *prakṛti* in Sāṃkhya philosophy implies a closed causal system of reductive materialism—‘reductive materialism’ in the sense that all thinking, fantasizing, imagining, feeling, and willing can finally be reduced to a modality or function of sheer materiality” (1980: 307; my underscoring).

The stipulation that “matter” and “nature” can be regarded as appropriate translations of *prakṛti* only “so long as they are not confused with our Western notions” of such terms is a peculiar one, for it would seem to suggest that absolutely nothing has been added to our understanding of *prakṛti* by the use of such translations. If, in order to act as a substitute for a foreign term, a familiar English term has to be radically redefined or so heavily qualified that the new meaning attributed to it is entirely different from its usual one, it might legitimately be asked whether it wouldn’t have been better to stick with the original foreign term. It may turn out to be the case that certain terms cannot be translated by any single word or expression without generating immense confusion, and in such circumstances I would advocate retaining the original term while doing one’s best to define its meaning (or range of uses) as clearly and comprehensively as possible.¹⁸ The use of inadequate translations places the interpreter who uses them in a position of perpetual backtracking, where a requirement is felt to frequently apologise for or significantly modify the terms one is using. This tendency is illustrated well in the following passage from a study of the concept of *prakṛti* by Knut Jacobsen:

Prakṛti is not ordinary matter like earth or air. It does not occupy space since space is a product of materiality. *Prakṛti* is a substance but matter in the sense of ‘atoms’ [...] is not the ultimate material cause of the world [...]. The material principle is not mental but also not material in the ordinary sense of the word. [...] *Prakṛti* is material in the sense that it is non-conscious. (1999: 225)

¹⁷ Cf. Jacobsen (1999: 258): “One should not confuse the material principle in Sāṃkhya and Yoga texts with the most common modern Western idea of nature by which nature means the beings and things that exist in the natural world.”

¹⁸ B. K. Matilal expresses a similar point when he observes that, “If we have a clear understanding of the meaning of the philosophic term we are trying to translate, then it is expected that we shall be able to find a suitable term in the second language which will ‘retain’ the original sense, provided, of course, such a term is available in the latter. But if the suggested term in the second language has certain shades of meaning that are not compatible with those of the original term, we should not recommend such a translation. For such an incautious translation is likely to generate confusion in the minds of those who are unacquainted with the first language” (1985: 320).

Jacobsen, like Larson (who supervised his research), tries to dissociate his own use of terms such as “matter” and “material” from their ordinary uses and ends up by offering a purely apophatic definition of “material” as that which is “non-conscious”. Although he does not explicitly mention Aristotle, the concept that Jacobsen, along with Larson and others, seems to be somewhat inelegantly searching for resembles that of Aristotle’s *prōtē hylē*, which became the *materia prima* of medieval scholastic philosophy. As Ernan McMullin has helpfully noted, “the existence of unqualified changes, and of a multiplicity of totally different sorts of substances, was for Aristotle a primary fact of our experience. If one is to explain *this* fact, the sort of ‘underlying nature’ required will not be a substantial stuff with recognizable properties, but rather an indefinite substratum, the featureless correlate of substantial form” (1963: 7).¹⁹ Aristotle’s form–matter distinction is, then, useful for understanding what certain interpreters are trying to get at in their notion of prakṛti as “primal matter”; but this is not to say that it is genuinely useful in understanding the concept of prakṛti itself. The main problem with its application to Sāṃkhya metaphysics is that the so-called manifest principles of prakṛti do not, strictly speaking, have “form”, and nor, therefore, is it possible to conceive of how they could have (or *be*) “matter”. Aristotle’s definition of matter as “the primary substratum of each thing, from which it comes to be without qualification, and which persists in the result” (*Physics* 192a 31)²⁰ is perhaps broad enough to encompass these manifest principles, but it cannot so much as hint at their most important feature, which is their capacity to generate *experience*. It is for this reason that I reject the claim made by S. K. Maitra that “The Sāṃkhya theory of experience [...] answers more nearly to the Aristotelian theory of a monistic becoming of an original primal matter than to the Kantian dualism of appearance and unknowable things-in-themselves” (quoted in Larson 1987: 641 n.83; my ellipsis). In Sāṃkhya and Yoga the role of the manifest principles is in fact very much like Kant’s transcendental conditions of experience. They stand for the very capacities and processes in us (*qua* complex experiencing subjects, not the pure consciousness of solitary puruṣa) that enable experience to arise. They include the *tanmātras*, which constitute the contents (or “matter”, in a Kantian sense) of experience, and the elemental forms (*bhūtas*) that are given to those contents in order to establish the experience of external objects. But these contents and elements are not things that *possess* matter and/or form; rather, they are the necessary conditions for our having the expe-

¹⁹ Cf. Peters (1967: 88): “*Hyle*, a purely Aristotelian term, does not have its origins in a directly perceived reality [...] but emerges from an analysis of change”.

²⁰ Trans. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye in McKeon 1941: 235.

rience of formal material entities. Thus to regard them, and the other principles, as being themselves formal entities would be extremely misleading.²¹

The interpretation of manifest prakṛti that I have begun to put forward here is highly controversial, and thus requires further elaboration, which will be given in the next chapter. Let us stay for a moment, however, with something in Jacobsen's remarks quoted above that is particularly troubling from a philosophical point of view. This is the statement that prakṛti "does not occupy space since space is a product of materiality." Although Jacobsen is not very explicit on this point, what I take him to mean is that since one of the five bhūtas, namely *ākāśa*, is normally identified in whole or in part with "space", and since the bhūtas are among the manifestations of prakṛti, prakṛti as it is in itself cannot be regarded as existing in space. This is a perfectly valid point. But Jacobsen expresses it badly due to his using "materiality" to stand for *prakṛti*. The statement that "space is a product of materiality", if it is not to be regarded as completely absurd, requires some considerable justification; and yet such justification is not forthcoming from Jacobsen. The statement's absurdity is due to the impossibility of our conceiving anything as being material without at the same time conceiving it as extended in space (and enduring over time); which impossibility indicates the logical priority of space (and time) over matter. Descartes acknowledges this point when he defines "body" (i.e. any material thing) as something "that can be contained in some place and fill a space in such a way that any other body is excluded from it" (1968: 104). Kant is able to abstract "matter" from space and time by changing its ontological status from thing-in-itself to the "sensory manifold"; the latter is still "objective" in so far as it is *received* by the faculty of sensibility, but it need no longer be thought of as spatiotemporal in nature, space and time being provided by the sensible faculty itself (*CPuR* A20–21/B34–35).²² If, however, matter is taken to exist outside our psychosensory apparatus—as it is on a typical realist account—then the conceptual problem of space and time arises. They must be considered to be either real in themselves (as was maintained by Isaac Newton for example) or to be merely logical ways of expressing the relations in which objects stand to one another (as Newton's opponent G. W. Leibniz asserted).²³ There is no sense in which they can be held to *derive* from matter. Thus, if Jacobsen's statement that space does so derive is an accurate portrayal of the Sāṃkhya view, that

²¹ Cf. Kant on "matter" and "form": "These two concepts underlie all other reflection, so inseparably are they bound up with all employment of the understanding. The one [matter] signifies the determinable in general, the other [form] its determination" (*CPuR* A266/B322; Kemp Smith's brackets).

²² "That in appearance which corresponds to sensation I term its *matter*; but that which so determines the manifold of appearance that it allows of being ordered in certain relations, I term the *form* of appearance" (*CPuR* A20/B34).

²³ A brief discussion of the difference between the positions of Newton and Leibniz on this issue is included in Gardner 1999: 70–71.

view can only be regarded as philosophically untenable. If, on the other hand, we do not assume *ab initio* that prakṛti equals “materiality”, then the way is left open to explore more tenable interpretive possibilities. As the next step in this exploration, let us now turn to the issue of prakṛti’s threefold “constitution”.

THE THREE “STRANDS” OF PRAKṚTI

According to the standard interpretation, in which prakṛti is held to be a “material principle” (or the “principle of materiality”), its three constituent “strands” (*guṇas*) are likewise regarded as material in nature. It was noted in the last section that they have been assumed by some scholars to be similar, analogous, or even identical to certain particles—atomic or subatomic—that reside in the theoretical repertoire of modern physical science. The following quotation from Feuerstein exemplifies this view:

The *guṇas* can be described as being the ultimate building-blocks of the material and mental phenomena in their entirety. They are not merely qualities or properties, but actual entities or ‘reals’ (S. Dasgupta, 1963) and as such non-distinct from the world-ground itself. They are the indivisible atoms of everything there is, with the exception of the Self (*puruṣa*), which is by definition *nir-guṇa*. (1980: 34; my underscoring)²⁴

There is, however, little textual justification for this “building-blocks” interpretation. Indeed, when one examines the key passages in the classical texts where the three *guṇas* are characterised, it is hard to imagine how anyone could suppose them to be material atoms at all. *Yogasūtra* 2.18 states that the “seeable” (*dṛśya*, i.e. prakṛti) is “of the nature (*śīla*) of shining forth (*prakāśa*), activity (*kriyā*), and steadiness (*sthiti*),” and notes that its twofold purpose is “experience (*bhoga*) and liberation (*apavarga*)”. This characterisation is echoed at *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* 13, where the first of the *guṇas*, *sattva*, is said to be “light” (*laghu*, i.e. not heavy or dense) and, as in the sūtra just quoted, “shining forth” or “luminous” (*prakāśaka*); the second *guṇa*, *rajas*, is “exciting” (*upaśāmbhaka*) and “mobile” (*cala*); and the third, *tamas*, is “heavy” (*guru*) and “enveloping” (*varaṇaka*). Here it is noted that the *guṇas* co-operate to fulfil their purpose “like a lamp” (*pradīpavat*, cf. *SK* 36).²⁵ The preceding *kārikā* (12) tells us that the *guṇas*’ essential natures (*ātmakas*) are, respectively, “gladness (*prīti*), perturbation (*apṛīti*), and stupefaction (*viṣāda*),” and adds that their characteristic functions (*arthas*) are, again, “shining forth (*prakāśa*), engagement (*pravṛtti*), and restraint (*niyama*)”.

²⁴ Cf. p. 32 of the same work, where Feuerstein notes that the *guṇas* “invite comparison with the ‘quantum packets’ of modern nuclear physics”! (And cf. p. 131 fn.15 earlier in this chapter.)

²⁵ Digambarji et al. (1989: 38) elaborate this point as follows: “Just as oil, a container, a wick, and a flame are brought together in such a way that a light is produced, lasts for some time and illumines objects, in the same way the three *Guṇas* combine in such a manner that they prove useful for *Puruṣas*.”

Their relation to one another is there said to involve “subjugation (*abhibhava*), support (*āśraya*), generation (*janana*), and intercourse (*mithuna*)”.

So what overall impression is to be gleaned from these various descriptions? In most instances, contrary to Feuerstein’s protestation, the descriptive terms seem to denote qualities or properties of objects, and nowhere could they be taken to denote substances (or “reals”) or material particles. In some cases they have a more subjective and emotional flavour, especially the reference to “gladness”, etc., at *kārikā* 12; while in the case of such characteristics as “engagement” and “restraint” they could be understood either subjectively *or* objectively. The several references to *prakāśa* in the case of *sattva* indicate that this *guṇa* concerns a thing’s power or capacity to be seen or known. This interpretation accords with Radhakrishnan’s assessment that *sattva* is the “tendenc[y] to manifestation” (1927 II: 266). The most literal translation of *sattva* is “being-ness”; and if we recall the discussion of *satkārya* earlier in this chapter, we will see that *sat* can be understood as “*formal* being/existence”, i.e. the existence of a thing *qua manifest thing*. In this light, *sattva* could be defined as the quality of being manifest, or (since manifestation is only possible in relation to a subject) the quality of being *cognisable*. Of course, it goes without saying that the manifestations of *prakṛti* must be imbued with such a quality, for otherwise there would be no sense in calling them “manifestations”. Furthermore, having defined *sattva* in this way, we can begin to comprehend why the *guṇas* are held to inhere within unmanifest *prakṛti* in a dormant or latent form; or, to put it another way, why their dormant condition is held to *constitute* unmanifest *prakṛti*. Obviously, if something is going to become manifest then it has to possess the *power* or *capacity* to manifest, and yet the very fact of its *becoming* manifest implies that its prior state is one of unmanifestness. This is all fairly platitudinous, but it needs to be said explicitly due to the prevalence of the “building blocks” interpretation of the *guṇas*.

If we now consider the other two *guṇas*, *rajas* and *tamas*, we see that the latter is characterised as embodying such qualities as stability, inertia, limitation, and boundedness, while the former could be regarded as the very opposite of these, namely instability (or mutability), mobility, expansion, and unboundedness. It does not require a tremendous leap of imagination to notice that the two tendencies typified by these qualities are both present to varying degrees in manifest phenomena, and that there may be something about the interplay between them that invariably accompanies manifestation. Davies has said of *rajas* that it “is rather the cause of an impetus than the impetus itself, the moving force rather than the motion” (1894: 38). This comes close to my own understanding of the term, although I think it could be expressed better as the *capacity to move*, rather than “the moving force”. The descriptions of it that occur

in the classical texts seem to me to suggest the quality of something's having energy, which implies the capacity for activity and thus motion and change. Presumably the thought behind such descriptions is that anything that was completely static (immobile, inert) could not manifest, for manifestation itself requires some kind of impulse or drive. If, however, there were no check on such an impulse—nothing to constrain and limit it—then the motion would be at risk of increasing towards infinite velocity in no specific direction (or, in other words, in all directions at once), which would inevitably preclude the integration and continuity that is necessary for anything to become manifest. And this is where *tamas* enters the picture, *tamas* being precisely the limiting tendency that prevents disintegration and furnishes any manifest object with the congruity or cohesion that must be in place if it is to be an object at all.

What I think is going on, then, in the doctrine of the three *guṇas* is a kind of transcendental analysis of experience. Feuerstein and I are in agreement that the *guṇas* “are experientially derived concepts” (Feuerstein 1980: 38), but whereas he means by “experientially derived” that the *guṇas* can be objects of immediate perception (albeit in yogically-induced “non-ordinary states of consciousness” (ibid.: 39)), my understanding of the *guṇas* is that they are held by Sāṃkhya and Yoga to be the absolutely basic criteria for anything's appearing or becoming manifest, and thus by definition they cannot in themselves be manifest, although their necessity can be deduced from the fact that manifestation occurs. It is this deductibility that I think is being alluded to when it is said at *kārikā* 8 that *prakṛti* cannot be perceived directly, but only via its “effects” (i.e. manifestations). What is added to this statement in the doctrine of the *guṇas* is that not only can the *existence* of *prakṛti* be inferred, but something can also be known about *prakṛti*'s constitution, viz. that it must comprise the three powers of manifest existence (*sattva*), mutability (*rajas*), and limitation (*tamas*).

A pertinent statement on this issue of the perceptibility, or non-perceptibility, of the *guṇas* is made in a quotation that Vyāsa includes (with apparent approval) in his commentary on *Yogasūtra* 4.13. The quotation (which Vācaspati attributes to the *Ṣaṣṭitantra*) reads: “The ultimate nature of the *guṇas* is not understood by way of perception (*drṣṭipatha*). That which is available to perception is like *māyā*.”²⁶ The expression “like *māyā*” (*māyā-iva*) is extremely interesting here. *Māyā*, of course, is often translated as “illusion”, and interpreted to denote a generative power which, in its creation, establishes a veil that obscures the underlying reality. Vācaspati takes the expression to mean that although what is available to perception is *like* *māyā*, i.e. like an illusion, it is not *in fact*, or not *quite*, illusory (*TV* 4.13). To my mind, this description resembles Kant's notion of the apparent or phenomenal world, or “the world as

²⁶ *guṇānām paramam rūpam na drṣṭipatham ṛcchati / yat tu drṣṭipatham prāptam tan māyeva sutucchakam //*

representation" (*die Welt als Vorstellung*) as Schopenhauer famously termed it: it is real in so far as it constitutes actual experience—which is to say, it is *empirically real*—but it cannot be held to be real *in itself*, i.e. *transcendentally real*. The appearance masks the underlying reality but also, paradoxically, reveals it, for it is only through its *appearing* that reality can be known as anything at all.²⁷ At least, that is the Kantian–Schopenhauerian claim. The claim of Sāṃkhya and Yoga is a little different in that it ascribes to the underlying reality the threefold constitution of the *guṇas*.

I do not mean to imply in any of this that the doctrine of the *guṇas* is perfectly limpid and devoid of complications. It is not; and I shall come to some of its complications shortly. The main point I wish to emphasise, however, is that the doctrine is not something whose origins are so mysterious that we need to attribute them to some kind of paranormal intuition. The sort of transcendental analysis that I referred to above is something that, in my view, underlies a great deal of the Sāṃkhya–Yoga philosophy, and not exclusively the *guṇa* doctrine. Even though the analytical process itself remains undisclosed, and all we are generally given are its *conclusions*, once the background presence of this mode of reasoning has been acknowledged, the internal logic of the systems starts to reveal itself as—if not fully coherent—at least broadly intelligible.

The fact that—as I hope has been adequately shown above—the *guṇas* are patently not material entities, or substances, or anything to do with the sorts of concepts that Feuerstein and others invoke from quantum mechanics, has significant implications for our understanding of *prakṛti* as a whole. For if the *guṇas*, which constitute the very nature of *prakṛti*, are not material, then it makes little sense to impute materiality to *prakṛti* itself, or to make the same imputation to any of *prakṛti*'s manifestations.

Turning now, however, to the problems with the *guṇa* doctrine, these must be admitted to be considerable. The root problem concerns the *guṇas*' ontological status. I have claimed that to interpret them as substances is misleading, but it is clear why such an interpretation is tempting; for any alternative—such as capacity, quality, property, power, tendency, etc.—seems to require the existence of a substance in order to be realised. If, for example, *sattva* is taken to be the capacity to manifest, *rajas* the capacity to move or change, and *tamas* the capacity to inhibit movement, then it is unclear how such capacities, or qualities, could exist in themselves independently of some *thing* or *entity* which possesses them. It makes

²⁷ Cf. Heidegger (1993: 76): "Kant uses the term 'appearance' in this twofold way. On the one hand, appearances are for him the 'objects of empirical intuition,' what shows itself in intuition. This self-showing (phenomenon in the genuine, original sense) is, on the other hand, 'appearance' as the emanation of something that makes itself known but *conceals* itself in the appearance."

sense to speak of an object, say an apple, as being manifest (and thus as having the capacity to manifest), as undergoing change (and thus as having mutability), and as being relatively stable (having the capacity to cohere); but if we remove the apple itself and try to consider the three qualities or capacities that were attributed to it on their own, they become curiously abstract and ephemeral, and certainly not the sorts of things that can easily (or even with strenuous effort) be conceived as fundamental constituents of objective reality. Ultimately I think the notion of “constituents” has to be abandoned. The guṇas are “constituents” of prakṛti merely in the sense that *prakṛti* is the collective term for them; the manifestations of prakṛti—i.e. buddhi, ahaṁkāra, and the rest—cannot, however, be intelligibly regarded as “constituted by” the guṇas. The guṇas are simply not the appropriate items for constituting a psychic or psychosensory condition of experience, which is on my view what each of the manifestations is. The guṇas must, therefore, be considered in some other way.

It is impossible to escape the fact that the guṇas are in some sense qualities, but they are also *conditions*; i.e. it is a condition of anything’s being a manifest thing that it should possess the three qualities for which the guṇas stand. What we have, in effect, is a two-tier transcendental analysis of experience: at one level the manifestations of prakṛti (as I shall explain in the next chapter) are deduced to be the necessary preconditions of experience (i.e. perception and thought), while at a “deeper”, more fundamental, level, the guṇas are deduced to be the necessary preconditions of the manifestations themselves. All of which is really saying little more than what I have said already, namely that for anything to manifest—i.e. to appear as something—it must possess at least the three guṇas. I say “at least” because, although the guṇas may be necessary conditions of manifestation, they are not the sole qualities possessed by buddhi and the other manifest principles. The Sāṃkhya response to this remark might be that it is through the interplay of the guṇas—i.e. the relations of “subjugation, support, [etc.]” (SK 12)—that other qualities are generated. But to accept this, one would have to re-subscribe to the “constituent” interpretation of the guṇas; for qualities cannot turn into new qualities by reacting to or combining with their fellows. A more plausible response would be that the guṇas are the most *fundamental*, the most *primary*, of all “primary qualities”; they are the qualities that anything—including any additional qualities that a thing might have—must possess in order to be counted as manifesting, and without which it would be either nothing at all or else pure consciousness (*puruṣa*). Still, however, it must be acknowledged that an ontological ambiguity remains in the concept of the guṇas, and that we cannot be entirely certain whether the originator (or originators) of the concept intended them to be qualities or constituents or some other kind of thing that somehow embraces both of these notions.

Another of the problems or complications associated with the *guṇas* that I can see concerns their relation to time and space. It was noted in the last section that *prakṛti* has been held—even by those such as Jacobsen who adopt a materialistic interpretation—to be the *source* of space (and of time as well), and that according to such a view *prakṛti* itself (and hence the *guṇas*) cannot be considered to exist *in* space (or *in* time). Various statements in the traditional literature on Sāṃkhya and Yoga support this view. With regard to time, Gauḍapāda comments that, whereas some have said that “time matures beings, time consumes (*saṃharati*, ‘takes’) the world; time watches while others sleep, time cannot be overcome”, Sāṃkhya’s reply would be that there are only “three types of things (*padārthas*)—the manifest (*vyakta*), the unmanifest (*avyakta*), and *puruṣa*—and time fits into one of these categories, [i.e.] it is manifest” (*GBh* 61).²⁸ The author of the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* appears to be a little more specific, stating that “space (*dis*) and time (*kāla*) [arise] from *ākāśa* and the others” (*SS* 2.12). But the statement is ambiguous due to the fact that both *dis* and *kāla* can, in the same way as their English equivalents, refer to either a *particular* space (in the case of *dis*) or time (in the case of *kāla*) or to “space” and “time” in general, i.e. as abstracted from any specific spatial areas or temporal periods. The commentator Vijñānabhikṣu takes it to be the *particular* (*khaṇḍa*, literally “broken”, “fragmentary”) kinds of space and time that are being referred to here. He concurs with Aniruddha that *ākāśa*, when limited by certain “conditioning factors” (*upādhis*), “is called ‘space’ and ‘time’” (*SSV* 2.12, cf. *SPBh*), but adds that space and time in themselves (i.e. in the abstract sense of these terms) are held not to arise from *ākāśa* but to be its source. They are in fact, says Vijñānabhikṣu, “eternal [...] specific properties of *prakṛti*” (*SPBh* 2.12).²⁹ Thus what starts off looking like an affirmation of the derivative nature of space and time becomes in the hands of the traditional commentators—especially Vijñānabhikṣu—a statement of the irreducibility of these principles. Space and time are accorded the status of eternal existents, and are thus placed on a par with the three *guṇas* as inherent qualities of *prakṛti*. This is all highly dubious, and ought not to be regarded as a definitive account of the Sāṃkhya position. The *Sāṃkhyasūtra* of course, being a *sūtra* text, tends to leave itself open to differing interpretations; but even if Vijñānabhikṣu’s reading of *sūtra* 2.12 is accurate, it need not be taken to represent the classical view on space and time, about which there is, regrettably, no explicit statement in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* or *Yogasūtra*.

Notwithstanding Vijñānabhikṣu’s assertion that space and time are “specific properties” (*guṇa-viśeṣa*) of *prakṛti*, the predominant view among scholars is that, according to classical

²⁸ *kālaḥ pacati bhūtāni kālaḥ saṃharate jagat / kālaḥ supteṣu jāgarthi kālo hi duratikramah // vyaktāvyaktapuruṣāḥ trayāḥ padārthāḥ tena kālo ’ntarbhūto ’sti / sa hi vyaktaḥ /*

²⁹ *nityau yau dikkālau tāvākāśaprakṛtibhūtau prakṛter guṇaviśeṣāveva*

Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the terms “space” and “time” do not denote real (mind-independent) properties or entities, but refer merely to qualities that are attributed to empirical objects by the cognising mind. An important—perhaps the *most* important—source of this view is Vyāsa’s commentary on *Yogasūtra* 3.52 (which appears as 3.51 in some editions), in which the commentator says of time that, though “devoid of object” (*vastu-śūnya*), it is “a mental construction (*buddhi-nirmāṇa*), and follows [i.e. accompanies] the cognition of a word (*śabda-jñāna*).” The terminology here echoes *Yogasūtra* 1.9, where *vikalpa* is defined as “following word-cognition, devoid of object.”³⁰ Thus, at least on Vyāsa’s account, time is a *vikalpa*, i.e. a form of intuition that invariably accompanies cognitions but which has no mind-independent existence. This appears to be an undiluted proclamation of what Kant would call the transcendental ideality of time. But if one looks at the commentary on sūtra 3.52 as a whole, it becomes apparent that Vyāsa is not quite making such a proclamation. Instead he is proposing a kind of atomic theory of time, according to which time is, in reality, nothing other than a succession of indivisible momentary units (*kṣaṇa*) and it is merely our ordinary view, wherein time is conceived in terms of artificial durations such as hours, days and nights, that is a mental creation. The moments are genuinely existent, and follow one another in a procession; and it is to such a procession of moments, says Vyāsa, that the yogin refers by means of the term “time” (*YBh* 3.52).

Thus, although the respective views of Vijñānabhikṣu and Vyāsa on time seem to be considerably different from one another, they have in common the fact that two types of time are distinguished—one of which is merely empirical and the other of which has a subject-independent (transcendental) reality. And the same distinction is made by Vijñānabhikṣu in the case of space. Again, however, we cannot be sure that such a distinction was endorsed by the classical darśanas. I noted earlier in this chapter that the description of prakṛti at *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 10 can be interpreted as proposing that the characteristics of prakṛti include its being “unconditioned, atemporal, and non-spatial”. It is only *manifest* prakṛti that is “non-eternal” (*anitya*, i.e. temporal) and “non-pervasive” (*avyūpin*, i.e. subject to spatial limitations). Therefore it would seem appropriate to surmise that, even though it is not stated explicitly in the *Kārikā*, the implicit view therein is that time and space obtain only within the empirical world, and not in the underlying reality composed of or characterised by the guṇas in their dormant state.

Having come this far we can now formulate the problem that exists concerning the guṇas’ relation to time and space. One aspect of the problem is that, if the guṇas are qualities (or

³⁰ *śabdajñānānupātī vastuśūnyo vikalpaḥ* //

properties, powers, etc.), then they must be qualities of some entity (for how could a quality exist in abstraction from any entity?); and the sort of entity that possesses qualities must exist *temporally* (in the case of all entities, both physical and mental) or both temporally *and spatially* (in the case of physical, i.e. “external”, entities). Think, for example, of the so-called primary qualities postulated by Locke: namely, solidity, extension, shape, mobility, number, and texture. It is evident that each of these can be instantiated only in time, and it is certainly arguable that all of them, with the exception of number, at least implies the presence of space as well. Therefore time (as a minimal condition) and space (in certain cases) must either coincide with or “precede” the existence of qualities. If it were to be accepted, *à la* Vijñānabhikṣu’s claim, that the guṇas are substances rather than qualities, the problem would not thereby be avoided; for how could three substances possibly be distinguished from one another in the absence of spatiotemporal dimensions? As Schopenhauer has pointed out, “time and space are the *principium individuationis*” (1974a: 148; cf. 1966 I: 112 f.); which is not to say that they are necessary preconditions for existence *per se*—for if that were so then time and space themselves would be precluded from existing—but that they are the principles that enable anything to be *a* thing at all, i.e. to be distinguished from the world in general. Thus it is far from clear that *three* things, namely the guṇas, can intelligibly be posited as existing “prior to” time and space and as being the source thereof. And it is presumably for reasons such as this that Vijñānabhikṣu asserts the “eternal” existence of space and time, as aspects of prakṛti alongside sattva, rajas and tamas.

Another aspect of the problem, which is really implicit in what has already been said, concerns the notion of the guṇas as “process”. The ways in which the guṇas are said to relate to one another—namely, “subjugation, support, generation, and intercourse” (SK 12)—are suggestive of processes, which must of course take place over a period of time.³¹ This processual nature of the guṇas is recognised by several interpreters, and is reflected in, for example, Larson’s preferred translation of *triguṇa* as “tripartite constituent process” (see esp. Larson 1987: 65 ff.). Again, then, the guṇas cannot intelligibly be conceived to interact independently of time. And even the notion of their remaining dormant until somehow animated by the presence of puruṣa is not adequate to get round the problem, since any transition from dormancy to activity, or from potentiality to actuality, can happen only *in time*. Indeed, the notion of dormancy or latency itself implies temporal duration, for it can be meaningful only

³¹ Sanat Kumar Sen begs to differ on this point: “the mere idea of alteration or transformation need not necessarily include the concept of time” (1968: 410–11). If he had bothered to explain how change can be considered to occur independently of time then there might be some grounds for taking his assertion seriously, but as no such explanation is given, the assertion looks to me very shaky indeed.

in opposition to activity, which must be a genuine possibility for whatever the notion is applied to. (In a similar way, temporal duration is implicit in the concept of immutability, as it is only *over a period of time* that something can be held to remain unchanged.)

These problems are significant, but it is not necessary that they be resolved here in order for the interpretation of the guṇas that I have proposed in this section to be accepted, or at least taken seriously. For the problems associated with space and time (and substance and causality for that matter) are ones that have troubled, and continue to trouble, every genuine attempt at a metaphysical theory. If we take Kant as an example, we see that part of his project for setting metaphysics upon a firmer footing was to reinterpret space and time as “forms of sensible intuition” and, as such, as being contributions brought to experience by the experiencing subject rather than as having any subject- and experience-independent existence (*CPuR* A22/B36 ff.). I mention this here partly because, in my view (which I shall elaborate in the next chapter), the Sāṃkhya concept of ākāśa amounts to something analogous to this “subjectivization” of space (and possibly time). But those who hold space and time to be real and independent of our forms of intuition can easily poke the finger at Kant and ask: If sensibility is a capacity for receiving sensory information, or “sense-matter”, (which seems to be among the claims made in the opening passage of the Transcendental Aesthetic), then from where if not from *outside* itself is such matter received? If it be affirmed that it is indeed received from outside, then some kind of spatial relation prior to the engagement of the relevant form of intuition (i.e. space) has thereby been admitted. And with regard to the other form of intuition (time), does not the attribution of this form to the manifold of sense-matter not imply a process, which in turn implies the prior existence of time?³² These problems are very similar to those touched upon in the last few paragraphs above, and I suspect that they, or their near cousins, are among the most enduring and complex of all philosophical issues. Thus we ought not to be surprised if clear and decisive solutions do not immediately spring forth from texts as laconic as the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and *Yogasūtra*.³³

I still maintain that “necessary conditions of manifestation” comes closest to expressing the meaning of the guṇas in Sāṃkhya and Yoga; and in the next chapter I shall argue, among

³² On this latter point see, for example, Kitcher (1990: 140): “The various activities that are described in the [Transcendental] Deduction’s account of how the mind influences (or might influence) what we know can only be understood temporally. They are processes and so take time. According to the [Transcendental] Aesthetic, however, the mind’s activities *produce* time. So they cannot take place in time.”

³³ The difficulty associated with space and time is highlighted by the fact that different philosophers have proposed widely diverging and mutually incompatible theories about them. With respect to claims about “time”, for example, Morris Lazerowitz has commented that “The differences between these claims are so startling as to incline one to suppose that philosophers are talking about altogether different things, that they are using the word ‘time’ in different senses, rather than that they are using the word in the same sense and are advancing different theories about the nature of what is denoted by it” (1968: 141).

other things, that “condition” should here—just as in Kant’s critical philosophy—be understood in the sense of something’s having logical priority over something else, and not, as in the cosmogonic interpretation of Sāṃkhya metaphysics, in the sense of temporal priority.

The Emergence of the Manifest Principles

THE CLASSICAL EXPOSITION of the manifestations of prakṛti occurs in the portion of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* beginning at kārikā 22 and ending at kārikā 38. It is in this portion that the twenty-three “created” (*vikṛti*) principles are named and defined (albeit in most cases with extreme brevity), and their order of creation is set forth. The names of these principles are well known, and their functions have received a copious amount of attention in the secondary literature. However, what remains very dimly understood, and hence a source of continuing agitation and bewilderment to scholars, is the nature of the relations between the principles and, connected with this, the reason for the order in which they are presented being as it is. Radhakrishnan expresses this agitation when he remarks that “It is difficult to understand the precise significance of the Sāṃkhya account of evolution, and we have not seen any satisfactory explanation as to why the different steps of evolution are what they are” (1927 II: 274). He can see no logic in the nature or order of the principles, and concludes that these things must be the result of “historical accidents” rather than any process of deduction on the part of Sāṃkhya philosophers (*ibid.*).

In this chapter I shall argue that the kind of bemusement exhibited by Radhakrishnan in the passage just quoted inevitably arises if one assumes at the outset that the schema of principles represents a cosmogonic narrative. Through the lens of such an assumption, the schema cannot but appear to be the arbitrary figment of a mythic imagination. The Sāṃkhya account offers no explanation of why mahat/buddhi should be considered the first product of the unmanifest ground, nor of how it comes to give rise to egoity, which in turn gives rise either directly or indirectly to the other twenty-one principles. Moreover, when each of the principles is regarded as singular, material and cosmological, it becomes impossible to conceive of how they relate to individual organisms and to human beings in particular.

After discussing the standard way in which the supposedly “evolutionary” schema is generally interpreted, I shall present an alternative reading, according to which the emergent principles are seen as necessary conditions of experience, and the order that they are enumerated in represents, not the temporal sequence in which they successively emerge, but the order of logical priority in what amounts to a transcendental phenomenological analysis (i.e. an analysis of the *a priori* factors that make experience possible). I shall then claim further that

this alternative, non-realist and non-cosmogonic, interpretation succeeds where others have failed in enabling us to make sense of the relation between the metaphysical schema of Sāṃkhya and Yoga on the one hand and the soteriological praxis of these darśanas on the other.

COSMOS AND PSYCHIE

In response to the problem alluded to above concerning how, if the manifest principles are cosmological, they can be held to relate to individual sentient persons, it has been assumed by some interpreters that the principles must be both cosmological *and psychological*. Radhakrishnan again exemplifies this position well:

Buddhi, as the product of prakṛti and the generator of ahaṃkāra, is different from buddhi which controls the processes of the senses, mind and ahaṃkāra. If the former is identified with the latter, the whole evolution of prakṛti must be regarded as subjective, since the ego and the non-ego are both the products of buddhi. This ambiguity is found in the other products of prakṛti also. (1927 II: 268)

Radhakrishnan has clearly discounted in advance the possibility that “the whole evolution of prakṛti must be regarded as subjective,” for he does not give it a second thought. It would, after all, conflict with the presupposition that a mind-independent physical reality in some way derives from the more obviously psychosensory principles. Rather than question this presupposition, Radhakrishnan prefers to posit *two* buddhis and *two* ahaṃkāras, and presumably (since he considers the same “ambiguity” to exist in them all) two of each of the other principles as well.

Ian Whicher appears to share this twofold conception of the manifest principles, while adding that the cosmic aspect must have ontological priority over the psychological one because the former “turns [...] into the psychological” when it is falsely identified with (by puruṣa). “It would”, says Whicher, “be a grave mistake to assert, as does S. Dasgupta, that the cosmic and individual *buddhi* for example, have the same ontological status” (1998a: 71). However, while claiming that the principles in their psychological aspect “have no ontological reality,” Whicher does not enlighten us as to what sort of thing a “cosmic” intellect might possibly be. Statements that “*Mahat* or cosmic knowing is the first created essence of *prakṛti*, as real as *prakṛti* herself” (ibid.) may sound very grand, but in the absence of an explanation of “cosmic knowing” they really amount to little more than metaphysical hyperbole of the most vacuous kind.

The notion of cosmic-psychological polarity is conspicuously absent from the original texts. Neither the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* nor the *Yogasūtra* anywhere speak of a cosmic *and* a psychological buddhi; they speak merely of *one* (kind of) buddhi (or *citta* in the case of the *Yogasūtra*). And the same applies to the other manifest principles. It is my view that *all* of these principles have a decidedly psychological—or, more precisely (as I shall argue later in this chapter), *phenomenological*—flavour, and that to interpret them and their relations in a coherent manner we need to reject the “cosmic” dimension altogether. Of course, the Sāṃkhya account *can* be read—and is perhaps most naturally and straightforwardly read—as a cosmogony. But this only goes to highlight one of the difficulties associated with deciphering a largely esoteric text such as the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*:¹ the most literal reading will in certain places also be the most philosophically plausible, while in other places it will be highly dubious. In these latter cases a more sophisticated interpretive approach is required in order to access the underlying meaning. There is, of course, never any guarantee that the intended meaning has been uncovered, but if alternative interpretations are possible, and—all other factors being equal—one of these is relatively philosophically coherent while its rivals end in unavoidable muddles, then it is my view that we should favour the most coherent.

“VERTICAL” AND “HORIZONTAL” ONTOLOGIES

Wilhelm Halbfass, in contrasting Sāṃkhya ontology with that of Vaiśeṣika, has proposed a distinction between “vertical” and “horizontal” ontologies. “Both of these systems present elaborate lists of world constituents”, he says.

However, the Sāṃkhya does so in a “vertical” manner; that is, in an enumeration of successive stages (i.e., the primeval “nature,” *prakṛti*, and its twenty-three evolutes).

The Vaiśeṣika, on the other hand, is the most representative case of a “horizontal” enumeration and classification of world constituents. It lists its cosmic factors and “categories” of reality not as successive stages in a scheme of evolution, but in a horizontal, synchronic arrangement, which includes, however, certain structures of dependence and subordination. (Halbfass 1992: 48–49; my underscoring)

This statement by Halbfass accurately represents the standard interpretations of Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika, but I wish to contend that it misses the underlying meaning of the Sāṃkhya schema. The part of the statement that I have highlighted is supposed to refer to the Vaiśeṣika ontology. I do not wish to dispute that it fairly describes that system’s approach. I do, however, wish to argue that it should *also* be seen as applying to the Sāṃkhya schema when that

¹ By referring to the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* as “esoteric”, I mean merely that it was composed primarily for the education of initiated disciples and is thus likely to present certain interpretive difficulties for non-initiates.

schema is properly understood. It would, of course, be foolish to claim that the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* “lists its cosmic factors [...] in a horizontal, synchronic arrangement”. Clearly it does not; and I would add that (as I have said above) I do not regard the “cosmic” reading of the principles as tenable in any case. What I think *can* legitimately be claimed, however, is that, although the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* presents its list of principles in an ostensibly diachronic and (in large measure) “vertical” manner, the nature of the principles in this list and of their relations with one another can best be understood in “horizontal, synchronic” terms.

Before I go on to explain why I think this is so, it should be noted that Halbfass was not the first to describe Sāṃkhya metaphysics in terms of a “vertical”/“horizontal” analogy. The analogy was also used by van Buitenen, only with the difference that he held that Sāṃkhya’s metaphysical schema—or “description of world evolution”—was partially vertical and partially horizontal (1957a: 16).² Van Buitenen’s point is that the descent from prakṛti to buddhi and then to ahaṃkāra is a case of “vertical evolution”, whereas “From the *ahaṃkāra* on this pattern is abandoned: its evolution becomes a ramification” (ibid.). The eleven indriyas (“powers”, “capacities”)—comprising the five sensory capacities, the five action capacities, and manas—are all derived from ahaṃkāra, as are the five tanmātras, from which come (in “vertical” fashion this time) the five elemental forms (*bhūtas*). “[T]he function of the *ahaṃkāra* in the evolution process is much more complicated than those of *pradhāna* and *mahān*”, notes van Buitenen. “By itself it creates the whole phenomenal world, not in successive evolutions, but immediately; it is the father of the world but its ways are mysterious” (ibid.). Although van Buitenen’s account of the Sāṃkhya schema preceded Halbfass’s, it nevertheless seems to me to be the more accurate of the two. Still, however, I would say that its accuracy lies only in its ability to describe how the manifest principles are presented in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*. It does not take us very far towards a comprehension of the underlying meaning of the relevant passages.

My interpretation of the so-called “world evolution” goes further than both Halbfass’s and van Buitenen’s, for it proposes that the sequence concerned does not portray a process of “evolution”, and neither is it immediately related to the “world”, i.e. to a supra-subjective (or “external”) realm of spatiotemporal entities. The sequence is, rather, a symbolic or analogical exposition of the psychosensory factors that make experience of such a world possible, the

² Van Buitenen’s vertical–horizontal model has subsequently been adopted by other interpreters. Cf., for example, Larson (1979: 179): “The emergence or evolution of the sixteen [i.e. the ten indriyas plus manas, and the five tanmātras] [...] is not ‘vertical.’ It is, rather, ‘horizontal’—i.e., *ahaṃkāra* becomes or is transformed into mind, senses, subtle elements, etc.”

order of the sequence's members being an indication, not of the respective positions of their emergence in time, but of their *logical* status in relation to their fellows.

THE ORDER OF EMERGENCE

As a way to begin exploring why I find the interpretation just stated more plausible than the “evolutionary” model, let us consider what is said about the transition from unmanifest to manifest prakṛti at *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 22:

From prakṛti, mahat; from that, ahaṃkāra; and from that, the group of sixteen; from five of those sixteen, the five bhūtas.³

In most translations of this kārikā the respective translators tend to insert additional words to explain, or at least provide some information about, the nature of the relations between the various principles mentioned. The following extracts from three existing translations exemplify this point (underscoring has been added by myself):

From Prakṛiti issues Mahat [...]; from this [...] issues Self-consciousness (Ahankāra), from which proceeds the set of sixteen; from five of these sixteen, proceed the five gross elements. (Jhā 1896: 61)

From Primal Nature proceeds the Great One [...], thence individuation, [etc.]. (Suryanarayana Sastri 1948: 46)

From *prakṛti* (emerges) the great one (*mahat*); from that (comes) self-awareness (*ahaṃkāra*); [etc.]. (Larson 1979: 262–63)

Thus, although the original kārikā tells us nothing, or virtually nothing, about the relations concerned, it has commonly been assumed that they involve an “issuing” (“outgoing, egress, outflow” (*Webster's*: 1201)), a “procession”, or an “emergence” of some kind. Since, however, the relation between unmanifest and manifest prakṛti must, by definition, also be acknowledged to be one of *manifestation* (or *appearing as*), we are obliged by such translations as those just quoted to understand manifestation as being equivalent to “issuing”, “proceeding”, or “emerging”. The problem here can be explained as follows. In normal usage, “manifestation” need not imply any ontological distinction between that which manifests and the manifestation (appearance) of that thing; that is, when we say that something was not, but now is, manifest, we do not thereby assert that the thing itself has changed, but rather assert that something has changed in the relation between that thing and ourselves (as perceivers or knowers). It is this fact that has enabled philosophers such as Kant to speak of the appearance

³ *prakṛter mahāṃs tato 'haṅkāras tasmād gaṇas ca ṣoḍaśakāḥ / tasmād api ṣoḍaśakāt pañcabhyaḥ pañca bhūtāni //*

(or manifestation) of a thing on the one hand, and the thing-in-itself on the other, as being two aspects of the same thing; the former aspect being the thing as considered in relation to a cognising subject and the latter being the same thing as considered independently of such a subject. It follows from this philosophical usage that “manifestation” need not imply any temporal relation between the thing-in-itself and the thing-as-manifest. We can talk of something’s *becoming* manifest—which expression *does* imply temporal duration—but we can also (if we regard the Kantian terminology as legitimate) talk of a thing’s *being* manifest and of its still being (*at the same time*) “itself”, and thus of its having a manifest and an unmanifest aspect which co-exist simultaneously. What the assumption that the relation between prakṛti and its manifest modes involves “issuing” (etc.) does is to effectively preclude any application of the Kantian understanding of manifestation, i.e. manifestation as simultaneous and non-transformative. Instead we are obliged to interpret the relation in terms of some kind of productive or, as we have seen already, *evolutionary* process.

One has to tread exceedingly carefully here, for there does exist textual evidence which suggests that the author of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* did indeed conceive the relation between unmanifest and manifest prakṛti as involving an “emergence” (or, as we will see, a “surgence”). Two of the key terms in this context are *pariṇāma* and *sarga*. Although the former term occurs only once in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, this occurrence is significant. (It is, in fact, far more prevalent in the *Yogasūtra*, wherein it appears eleven times, and was touched upon in Chapter 4 when I discussed *Yogasūtra* 4.14.) The most literal translation of *pariṇāma* would be “bending around”, but generally it is rendered more helpfully as “transformation” or “modification”. In kārikā 16 it occurs (as *pariṇāmata*, “transformable”) as part of a description of unmanifest prakṛti. The unmanifest (*avyakta*) is said there to be “the source (or ‘cause’, *kāraṇa*) [of all manifest things], operating due to the combination of the three guṇas, transformable (*pariṇāmata*) like flowing water (*salilavat*) due to the specific [nature] of each of these guṇas that underly it.”⁴ The simile of “flowing water” (or “fluidity”) is also highly pertinent to the other term we are interested in here, namely *sarga*, which is etymologically cognate with the English word “surge” (via the Latin *surgere*, “to rise up”, from which we also get “source” (cf. Partridge 1966: 683)). At kārikā 21 occurs the expression *api saṃyogas tatkṛtaḥ sargaḥ*. This has commonly been translated as “from this union proceeds creation”,⁵ but since *saṃyogas* (= *saṃyogaḥ*) is in the nominative, not the ablative, case, a more accurate rendering

⁴ *kāraṇam asty avyaktaṃ pravartate triguṇataḥ samudayāc ca / pariṇāmataḥ salilavat pratipratiguṇāśrayaviśeṣāt //*

⁵ Jhā 1896: 60. Cf. Suryanarayana Sastri 1948: 45 (and Larson 1979: 262): “from this (association) creation proceeds.”

would be: “that conjunction indeed *is* creation, surgence” (emphasis added), the conjunction in question being that of puruṣa and prakṛti. In any case, taking into account kārikā 16, the meaning of the present passage would seem to be that, when in conjunction with puruṣa, prakṛti is modified or transformed in such a way that it “swells” or “surges forth” as a formal or manifest creation, which creation, as we learn in the subsequent kārikā, comprises the twenty-three manifest principles.

Now, what I have just given is a literal interpretation; but what I wish to claim is that *sarga* ought to be understood metaphorically as standing for the *manifestation* (or *appearance*) of prakṛti—which exists simultaneously with unmanifest prakṛti *as its knowable façade*—and not for its “real transformation” from one state to another. My view is supported by such passages as kārikā 2, where it is stated that the best method of eradicating the threefold dissatisfaction (*duḥkha*) referred to in kārikā 1 is to acquire “special knowledge” or “discerning awareness” (*viññāna*) of (the differences between) “the manifest, the unmanifest, and the knower.” I take this to imply that the manifest and unmanifest aspects of prakṛti co-exist and can, as the result of diligent practice (i.e. *yoga* practice, *abhyāsa*), be distinguished from one another. Of course, someone who holds that unmanifest prakṛti is an infinite reservoir of matter (cf., for example, Larson’s “undifferentiated plenitude of being” (1979: 12, 167)) might contend that such a reservoir could give rise to any number of real finite entities without diminishing its own existence, and that the co-existence of unmanifest and manifest prakṛti can thus be accounted for without the need to adopt my “dual aspect” interpretation. And this is where it becomes necessary to remind ourselves of the flimsiness and wrong-headedness of the claim that prakṛti is a material principle.⁶ Attention has already been given (in Chapter 5 above) to prakṛti in itself, and to its three “strands”, so let us now consider its manifest principles and ask whether any of them seem to be material evolutes of some primordial material principle.

The first enumerated principle is, as we know, mahat, otherwise known as buddhi. As was noted in Chapter 4, buddhi is defined as *adhyavasāya* (SK 23), which term is also associated with perception (SK 5), and may be translated as “ascertainment” or “discernment”. Buddhi is said to have a *sāttvika* (light, positive) and a *tāmasa* (dark, negative) aspect, the former comprising “virtue (*dharma*), knowledge (*jñāna*), non-attachment (*virāga*), and masterfulness (*aiśvarya*)”, and the latter comprising the opposites of these (SK 23). These various mental

⁶ Radhakrishnan exhibits an awareness of the problem I am discussing when he remarks that “In spite of the things to which prakṛti gives rise, its substance is in no way diminished. The source of becoming is not exhausted by the things produced. No material thing can act without exhausting some of its latent energy. *It is thus difficult to regard prakṛti as purely material in nature*” (1927 II: 274; emphasis added). Regrettably, however, Radhakrishnan does not follow up this doubt, and therefore opens up a vast hole in his interpretation of Sāṃkhya and Yoga without attempting to fill it in.

qualities or dispositions are referred to later in the text as *bhāvas* (SK 40, 43, 52), a term whose meaning is very broad, and which can denote any “being” or “state of being”. In the context of Sāṃkhya philosophy the *bhāvas* seem to play a role similar to the *saṃskāras* and *vāsanās* of Yoga, both of which latter terms refer to mental traits or habitual modes or patterns of response (or perhaps psychic traces that *impel* such responses). In the case of the *bhāvas*, *saṃskāras* and *vāsanās*, there are certain types of these mental factors which are to be cultivated, and others which are to be eradicated; but eventually all of them, whether ostensibly positive or negative, must be left behind if the soteriological goal of *puruṣa*’s aloneness (*kaivalya*) is to be realised (SK 67–68). In Yoga one of the principal expressions applied to the mental state in which all *saṃskāras* have been pacified or dissolved is “seedless-” (*nirbīja*-) *saṃādhi* (YS 1.51; 3.8), which reflects the fact that *saṃskāras* are regarded as seeds of misidentification.

What emerges from the above points is that *buddhi* is best regarded as encompassing a range of mental states, dispositions and capacities, although it is most particularly associated with discerning awareness, or, in other words, with intentional (object-directed) consciousness, as distinct from the “pure” consciousness with which *puruṣa* is identified.⁷ Taking all of its various associations into account, the common translation of *buddhi* as “intellect” is not inappropriate (although perhaps “intellection” or “discernment” would be better⁸), which is why it may come as some considerable surprise that a great many interpreters of Sāṃkhya and Yoga nevertheless regard *buddhi* (along with all the other principles) as “material”.⁹ If one is to regard something that is patently mental as also being material, then it would be not merely helpful, but an absolute necessity, to explain the sense in which one is using these terms; for in western philosophy “mental” and “material” (or “mind” and “matter”) have traditionally been defined in opposition to one another. Although modern physicalists have on occasions said things such as “the mind is the brain” (e.g. Dennett 1991: 33), on the whole they are more careful to stipulate that mental phenomena can be *reduced to* neurophysiological phenomena

⁷ Christian Lassen’s Latin translation of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, it may be noted, renders *adhyavasāya* (by which term *buddhi* is defined) as *intentio* (cited in Davies 1894: 56). [Lassen’s work was first published at Bonn in 1832.]

⁸ Mohanty has noted that, while “modern speech is characterized by fixed parts [...], in ancient tongues the same word could do the work of a noun, adjective, verb and adverb. The word *cit*, for example, may equally well mean—in Vedic Sanskrit—to know, knowing, knower, knowledge and knowingly” (1993: 130). In view of this fact we should not be too quick to judge that *buddhi* denotes a process or activity (such as discerning something) and *not* a faculty or capacity. However, in the overall context of the transcendental phenomenological reading of Sāṃkhya metaphysics that I shall be developing in this chapter, it is the “activity” aspect which makes most sense.

⁹ “In the system of Kapila, everything connected in function with sensuous objects is as material as the objects themselves, being equally an emanation from *Prakṛti*” (Davies 1894: 18). Cf. *ibid.*, p. 17 fn.3: “Modern science, like the system of Kapila, makes intellect a mere form of matter.”

(and hence to matter), or that, although states of intentional consciousness exist, they “are realized in the neurophysiology of the brain” (Searle 1983: 15; original emphasis). As we saw in the last chapter, however, those who adopt a materialist interpretation of prakṛti tend to fall very far short of explaining what they mean by “matter” or “material”, and consequently end up using apparently paradoxical expressions to refer to certain of prakṛti’s manifestations, such as “mental material principles” (Jacobsen 1999: 225), without giving us any good reason to regard these expressions as anything other than nonsense.¹⁰

Turning now to the second enumerated principle, ahaṁkāra, we find that it is tersely defined as *abhimāna* (SK 24), which can denote self-conceit and pride or the mere having of a thought of oneself.¹¹ As was noted in Chapter 1 above, van Buitenen has proposed an interesting theory that the notion of ahaṁkāra has its origin “in the ancient upaniṣadic speculations on a self-formulating, self-creating primordial personality” (1957a: 21), whose very verbal ejaculation “*aham!*” (“I!”) constitutes his self-formulation, which in turn constitutes the cosmos (1957a: 19). If interpreted with a realist bias this equivalence between self-formulation and universal creation sounds bizarre, and can be regarded only as an extravagant creation myth. Van Buitenen himself notes (*ibid.*) that the distinction “between macrocosmos and microcosmos” seems to be absent in the ancient texts to which he is referring (principally early portions of the *Bṛhad.Up* and the sixth chapter of the *Chānd.Up*), but he does not take what would seem to be the obvious next step, which is to regard the “macrocosmic” (i.e. cosmogonic) story as a mythopoetic exposition of an essentially idealist notion, namely that the individuation of the subject does not merely coincide with the emergence or manifestation of the world but is, rather, *its logical precondition*.¹² In my view it is this latter insight that underlies the Sāṃkhya claim that from ahaṁkāra (or due to its existence) “the rolling forth (*pravartate*) of the twofold surge (*sarga*, i.e. manifestation) [occurs],” comprising on the one hand the ten “capacities” (*indriyas*) plus the organising aspect of mind (*manas*), and on the other hand the

¹⁰ Jacobsen’s full statement is, to me at least, simply unintelligible: “Sāṃkhya and Yoga are, one could say, materialistic on the top (but not in the ordinary sense), and bottom, i.e., the ultimate material principle and gross material things such as water and air are non-conscious, and mental in the middle, i.e., *buddhi* and *ahaṁkāra* are mental material principles.”

¹¹ “The ordinary sense of both words (i.e., *abhimāna* and *ahaṁkāra*) is *pride* and the technical import is the pride or conceit of individuality” (Colebrooke (in Colebrooke and Wilson 1837: 91), quoted in Chennakesavan 1980: 24).

¹² This point, or one very similar to it, was persuasively made, before Kant and long before Schopenhauer, by Rousseau, who, as Safranski has noted, “compared the ‘sensation of self’ and the ‘perception’ of the external world, and arrived at the conclusion that an individual could ‘have’ a sensation only if he entered into the sensation of self; and since perceptions brought home what existed outside, while at the same time existing only in the medium of the sensation of the self, it followed that without a sensation of self there was no existence. Or the other way about: the sensation of self produced existence” (Safranski 1989: 110; cf. Rousseau 1763, bk 4). Cf. Schopenhauer: “the necessity or need of *knowledge in general* arises from the plurality and *separate* existence of beings, from individuation” (1966 II: 274; original emphasis).

five “measures of that” (*tanmātras*) (*SK* 24).¹³ Whether this interpretation is or is not accepted, however, it can hardly be denied that one would have to perform some extraordinary contortions with the concept of matter in order to define the notion of individuation (i.e. one’s self-conception or self-formulation)—which *ahaṃkāra* is fairly uncontroversially supposed to stand for—as a material principle.

We come now to the *indriyas* and *manas*. The ten *indriyas* are divided into two sets of five. The first set, named *buddhīndriyas* (literally, “awareness-” or “discernment-capacities”), comprises “seeing (*cakṣus*), hearing (*śrotra*), smelling (*ghrāṇa*), tasting (*rasana*), and touching (*tvac*)” (*SK* 26). Several translators—including Davies (1894: 61), Jhā (1896: 66), Suryanarayana (1948: 51), and Larson (1979: 264)—misleadingly take the passage just quoted to refer to sensory *organs* (“eye, ear, nose, tongue, and skin”).¹⁴ But the emphasis in the original text is not upon organs, nor even, to be precise, upon the senses (i.e. the sensory capacities or faculties such as the faculty of sight, and so on), but is, rather, upon the types of *sensation* themselves, i.e. (as I have tried to make clear by my choice of words in the translation) the phenomenological events of *seeing*, *hearing*, *smelling*, etc.

The second set of *indriyas*, named “action capacities” (*karmendriyas*), comprises “speaking (*vāc*), clasping (*pāṇi*), foot (*pāda*), anus (*pāyu*), and ‘under-part’ (*upastha*, i.e. genitalia)” (ibid.). Here the terminology is less precise than in the case of the *buddhīndriyas*. *Vāc* and *pāṇi* could be translated as vocal and manipulative faculties respectively, or simply as “hand” in the case of *pāṇi*; and the terms for the remaining three *karmendriyas* do not really warrant being translated as anything other than the names of particular organs. At *kārikā* 28, however, the *karmendriyas* are characterised in terms of their functions or modes of operation (*vṛtti*), which are, respectively, “speaking (*vacana*), grasping (*ādāna*), wandering (*viharāṇa*), excreting (*utsarga*), and intense pleasure (*ānanda*).”¹⁵ And in the same *kārikā* the activity of the *buddhīndriyas* is said to consist in “mere awareness” (*ālōcana-mātra*), which implies that these *indriyas* are not *particular* sensations but are, rather, the conditions of (the five types of) sensation as such. Nevertheless, whether we take them to be sensations, or the conditions of (or capacities to have) sensations, it is again clear that the *buddhīndriyas* are in no obvious sense material entities, and I think the same can be said of the *karmendriyas*.

¹³ *SK* 24 reads in full: *abhimāno’haṃkāras tasmād dvividhaḥ pravartate sargaḥ / ekādaśakaś ca gaṇas tanmātraḥ pañcakaś caiva //*

¹⁴ To be fair to Larson, he did later adopt the more accurate English terms (“seeing”, etc.) that I have used in my translation of the passage (e.g. Larson 1987: 49); but the erroneous terms are used in both existent editions of his translation of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*.

¹⁵ It is noteworthy that the function of the genitals is characterised in terms of sexual pleasure, for interpreters still tend to assume that *procreation* is what these organs primarily stand for in the Sāṃkhya system (e.g. Larson 1987: 49).

Manas is defined as being the essence (*ātmaka*) of both sets of indriyas (and thus as being an indriya itself) and as *saṃkalpaka*, which can be translated as “resolve” or “decision” (SK 27). For etymological reasons, *manas* is normally translated simply as “mind”; but this is misleading, for in Sāṃkhya philosophy it evidently stands for a specific *aspect* of what is very loosely referred to in English as “the mind”. Davies, for example, acknowledges this fact when he notes that “The Latin *mens* and our *mind* correspond to it [*manas*] in origin but not in meaning” (1894: 63); but then, unduly influenced by some very unhelpful assumptions, he offers the following misguided contrast between manas and the western concept of mind:

In our Western philosophy, mind is usually considered as an expression for the rational faculties of the soul, and as opposed to matter; but in the view of Kapila [i.e. classical Sāṃkhya], it is not a part of the soul, but is itself a form of matter from a material source (*Prakṛiti*). (Ibid.; my under-scoring)

There are too many problems with this statement to go into them all, but central among them is the implicit conflation of the western notion of “soul”, as a thing that can have “faculties” (whether rational or of any other kind), with the *puruṣa* of Sāṃkhya, which latter notion is usually associated with non-complexity (and hence with an absence of faculties). If such a conflation had not been made, the proposal that manas “is not a part of the soul” would be tolerable, but the ambiguity that surrounds Davies’ use of “soul” seriously detracts from his intended meaning. My main reason for quoting the passage, however, is not to pick faults with Davies alone, but to re-emphasise a more general point, namely how the pervasive assumption of prakṛti’s materiality can generate unwarranted claims that are both interpretively and philosophically dubious. In the present case, this assumption generates the claim that manas, although by definition mental, is nevertheless “a form of matter”.

Manas is widely understood to be an organising faculty, in which sensations are collected and arranged into perceptual experiences (Davies calls it “the *sensorium commune*” (1894: 63)). This, in my view, is a valid interpretation, and one which gives due emphasis to Sāṃkhya’s insistence on the *active* and *constructive* role of the mind in the generation of experience. What is not so commonly emphasised, however, is the status of manas as the instigator of the various types of action represented by the karmendriyas, and the close correspondence that this aspect of manas has with the western philosophical notion of *will* or *volition*.¹⁶ This meaning of *manas* is not elaborated in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* itself, but the use of the term

¹⁶Radhakrishnan speaks of manas as “suggesting alternative courses of action and carrying out the decrees of the will through the organs of action”, but not as the will itself (1927 II: 269–70). Davies, meanwhile, denies that Sāṃkhya “attributed volition to any form of matter [i.e. any form of prakṛti]” (1894: 56).

saṃkalpaka in its definition strongly implies it.¹⁷ Some interpreters have associated *buddhi*, rather than *manas*, with will, and Jhâ even uses “will” as a direct translation of *buddhi* (1896: 62);¹⁸ while, contrariwise, others have identified *manas* with intellect (e.g. Zimmer 1953: 317, 321 fn.45). It is not crucial that we resolve this minor confusion here. The important thing is to acknowledge the decidedly non-physical nature of *manas*.

It may be noted at this point that Sāṃkhya has a collective term for the three aspects of the mind that have so far been mentioned, those being *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra* and *manas*. The term is *antaḥkaraṇa*, meaning literally “inner instrument”, and this is distinguished from the “outer” (*bāhya*) instrument, which comprises the five kinds of sensation and five modes of action (*SK* 33). Together these “inner” and “outer” aspects form what is known simply as the “instrument” (*karaṇa*, *SK* 32). The outer instrument is related to “present time” (*sāmpratakāla*), whereas the inner instrument is related to the “three times” (*trikāla*), which I (along with traditional commentators such as Gauḍapāda and Vācaspati) take to mean that the mind, in addition to being in the present, can remember the past and anticipate the future, whereas sensation and action are restricted to the present alone (*SK* 33). The terms “inner” and “outer” are presumably meant to denote, not spatial relations, but the fact that the operations of the former—namely, discernment (*buddhi*), egoity (*ahaṃkāra*), and sensory synthesis and volition (*manas*)—are experienced as intra-mental, while sensations and actions are experienced as being, respectively, received from and performed upon supposedly extra-mental objects. (I say “supposedly” because there is nothing in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* to indicate explicitly that empirical objects are in reality exterior to the mind.) One further metaphor that could be mentioned here concerning the relation between the inner and outer instruments occurs at *kārikā* 35, where it is said that

Since *buddhi*, together with the other [two] inner instruments, is immersed in (*avagāhate*) all objects, therefore this threefold instrument is the chamber (*dvārin*) and the remaining ones [i.e. the ten *indriyas*, or possibly just the five *buddhīndriyas*] are the doors (*dvāras*).¹⁹

In this translation I have followed Suryanarayana’s suggestion (1948: 66–67) that, contrary to the opinion of most other translators, what *dvārin* refers to is “that to which channels lead” and not a “warder”, “gate-keeper” or “door-keeper” (cf. e.g. Davies 1894: 71; Jhâ 1896: 76; Larson 1979: 266; but also MW: 504). The metaphor seems to be intended to represent the idea that sensations are the “doorways” through which knowledge of external objects is con-

¹⁷ Cf. MW (p. 1126, under “Saṃ-kalpa”): “conception or idea or notion formed in the mind or heart, (esp.) will, volition, desire, purpose, definite intention or determination or decision or wish for [...]”

¹⁸ Larson, on the other hand, hedges his bets by referring to *buddhi* as “‘will’ or ‘intellect’” (1979: 263).

¹⁹ *sāntaḥkaraṇā buddhiḥ sarvaṃ viśayaṃ avagāhate yasmāt / tasmāt trividhaṃ karaṇaṃ dvāri dvārāṇi śeṣāṇi //*

veyed to the cognising mind, but again it makes no definitive claim regarding the ontological status of the “external objects” themselves.

I noted earlier that the five “measures of that” (*tanmātras*) are among the principles to “roll forth” from ahaṁkāra, the others being the indriyas and manas, which have just been discussed. The doctrine that the tanmātras derive from the mental phenomenon of “egoity”, or depend upon it in some intimate way, is extremely significant, and it causes immense difficulties for any imputation of realism to Sāṃkhya. Or, rather, it *ought to* cause such difficulties, but all too often these are glossed over by interpreters who make the realist assumption.²⁰ Such interpreters generally assume that the tanmātras are “material essences”, which somehow “generate the five gross elements” (Larson 1987: 50), and that these gross elements (*bhūtas*) in turn constitute macroscopic physical entities.²¹

The problem here ought to be obvious: on the one hand the tanmātras are held to give rise to physical objects, which are real in the sense of being mind-independent; and yet, on the other hand, the tanmātras are themselves derived from a mental principle, namely ahaṁkāra, thus making them and anything that follows from them thoroughly *dependent* upon (and possibly, in some sense, *constituted by*) the mind! This would seem, as long as the realist assumption is clung onto, to be an irresolvable paradox; and in my view its credibility as a valid interpretation of the Sāṃkhya position needs to be seriously questioned. Rather than letting this paradox cast doubt upon their cherished realist assumption, however, the majority of interpreters have invoked what has now become a bulwark of the standard interpretation, namely the concept of “subtle matter”. This expression, and its synonyms such as “subtle substance”, “subtle material”, and so forth, has become ubiquitous within the secondary literature on Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and is commonly applied to all the manifest principles except the *bhūtas* (which are described instead as “gross” or “coarse” matter), and occasionally to unmanifest prakṛti and the guṇas themselves. A smattering of quotations will suffice to illustrate the point:

[Buddhi] is material, but of the subtlest form of matter. (Davies 1894: 17–18)

[Buddhi] is regarded as the subtle substance of all mental processes. It is the faculty by which we distinguish objects and perceive what they are. The functions of buddhi are ascertainment and decision. (Radhakrishnan 1927 II: 267)

²⁰ One interpreter who finds himself unable to gloss over them is Frauwallner, who, while going along with the overall realist interpretation of Sāṃkhya, regards the doctrine of the tanmātras as utterly baffling, and announces “that no valid ground is found in the [Sāṃkhya] system to make its introduction [...] appear intelligible” (1973 I: 272). Such statements, in my view, say far more about the inadequacies of the particular interpretive approach concerned than about the Sāṃkhya material itself.

²¹ Cf. Davies (1894: 19): “From Ahaṁkāra [...] proceed the five subtle elements (*tanmātra*) which are the primary forms or essences of gross material things”.

With the co-operation of rajas [ahaṃkāra dominated by tamas] is transformed into subtle matter, vibratory, radiant and instinct with energy, and the tanmātras of sound, touch, colour, taste and smell arise. (Ibid.: 271)

The world develops according to certain laws out of primitive matter, which first produces those subtle substances of which the internal organs of all creatures are formed, and after that brings forth the gross matter. (Garbe 1899: 10)

[A tanmātra is] undifferentiated and causal stuff and is just subtle or psychic matter. (K. C. Bhattacharyya 1956 I: 175)

[T]he guṇas are non-intelligent subtle substances [...]. (Dasgupta 1922: 259)

From this selection of passages an impression can be gleaned of the kinds of ambiguities and confusions that the concept of subtle matter gives rise to. In the first of the two quotations from Radhakrishnan, for example, it is far from clear what is meant by the phrase “the subtle substance of all mental processes.” It could mean that the principle being described (i.e. buddhi) is some kind of mental substance or “mind-stuff” which *constitutes* mental phenomena. But in the next two sentences we learn that it is a “faculty” with specific “functions”, which description seems incompatible with buddhi’s being a constitutive substance. After all, a faculty might be said to *belong* to a thing that is composed of a certain substance, but I cannot see how a faculty can *be* a substance, however “subtle” it is assumed to be. Then, from Garbe, we get the claim that, according to Sāṃkhya, prakṛti “produces” certain “subtile substances” and then goes on to “[bring] forth the gross matter”; but he neglects to point out (at least in this passage) the crucial fact that the so-called gross matter is supposed (on the realist view, to which Garbe generally subscribes) to *derive from* or *evolve out of* the subtle substances. It is understandable why one might be tempted to downplay this fact, especially if one is inclined, like K. C. Bhattacharyya for example, to treat “subtle” as equivalent to “psychic”—for how could psychic (i.e. mental) entities be the *material* source of “gross” ones?—but this is no excuse for sloppy thinking and sloppy interpretive descriptions.

Some other scholars have been far less reserved about admitting that, on their reading, real physical entities must be held by Sāṃkhya to be the end-products of the same chain of evolution to which belong “intellect”, “egoity”, “sensations”, etc. Again, however, they have tended to mask the obviously mental nature of these latter principles by referring to them as “subtle” rather than “mental”, and have used this term “subtle”—sometimes with amazing repetitiveness—to imply that the evolutionary chain is a graded continuum from unmanifest prakṛti at one end to the bhūtas (interpreted as physical particles) at the other, with no sudden and inexplicable leap from mental stuff to material stuff. Sen Gupta is one such interpreter, and the

following passage illustrates not only her “gradual evolution” theory but also the over-zealousness with which the term “subtle” can sometimes be used:

According to Sāṃkhya, the evolutionary change means gradual change from more subtle to less subtle. *Prakṛti* is the subtlest of all the constitutive principles of the world. So, the first evolute should be such which is less subtle than *Prakṛti* but more subtle than the succeeding categories. This is possible only if *sattva guṇa* becomes the predominating *guṇa* in the first category. (Subtlety can be generated in a category merely by increasing the *sattva guṇa*.) (Sen Gupta 1982: 98)²²

The word “subtle” derives from the Latin *subtilis*, “finely woven,” and has a range of meanings, including “delicate, elusive [...], imperceptible, intangible [...], [and] refined” (*Webster’s*: 2281). The expression “subtle matter” is not unheard of in western philosophy. Descartes, for example, uses it to denote “particles of indefinite smallness” that are produced by the collision of “violently agitated” matter with “other bodies” (1985 I: 258).²³ But none of this helps us very much in trying to make sense of passages such as the one just quoted from Sen Gupta.

I do not mean to imply by my remarks above that “subtle” should be banished from the interpretive literature on Sāṃkhya. It is in fact the most appropriate translation of the Sanskrit term *sūkṣma*, with which it may share some remote etymological ancestry,²⁴ and *sūkṣma* (along with *saukṣmya*, “subtlety”) is certainly made use of in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* (at SK 7, 8, 37, and 39) and in the *Yogasūtra* as well (at YS 1.44, 45; 2.10, 50; 3.25, 44; and 4.13). Indeed, when discussing kārikā 8 in the last chapter we saw *prakṛti*’s “subtlety” (*saukṣmya*) being given as a reason for its imperceptibility; and it would be fair to infer from this—since *prakṛti* is known via its manifest modes—that these modes are held to be (as Sen Gupta says) “less subtle” than unmanifest *prakṛti*. Furthermore, Sen Gupta is right to draw a connection between a thing’s “subtlety” and the extent to which the quality of *sattva* prevails in that thing, although I don’t think the relation is quite as straightforward as she implies it to be. The parenthetical remark that she makes at the end of the passage quoted above suggests that *sattva* is somewhat analogous to a chemical constituent that can be added to or subtracted from an en-

²² Cf. p. 102 of the same work: “Evolutionary passage, according to the Sāṃkhya-school, is simply the passage from the subtle to the gross. After the emergence of the gross elements, the process of evaluation [*sic*] stops in the sense that the *pāñcabhautic* changes are simply changes from gross to more gross.” Balbir Singh adopts a similar continuum model to that of Sen Gupta, but without such a saturating application of the term “subtle”: “At every stage the evolutes display their continuity with those of the preceding stage, so that there is no break, discontinuity, or gap” (1976: 132).

²³ The expression “subtle matter” does not actually occur in this passage (i.e. *Principles of Philosophy* III.52), but Descartes notes elsewhere (1985 I: 322 [*Description of the Human Body and of All its Functions* IV]) that what the description applies to can be called “subtle matter”.

²⁴ Monier-Williams considers the most likely verbal root of *sūkṣma* to be *siv*, “to sew” (see entries under “*sūkṣma*” and “*Sūci*” in MW: 1240 and 1241), which indicates a close semantic and possibly etymological parallel with the Latin *subtilis*.

tity in order to increase or decrease its level of “subtlety”. If this were the case, however, then that which is most “subtle” of all—namely unmanifest prakṛti itself—would contain the highest proportion of sattva; and yet, as is generally agreed, prakṛti in itself comprises the three guṇas in a state of perfect equilibrium.

In my view the link between subtlety and sattva resides in the notion of “purification”, which is invoked more explicitly in Yoga than in Sāṃkhya, but which can nevertheless be considered to pervade the soteriological dimension of both systems. In the *Yogasūtra* the term *sattva* appears to be used as a synonym of *buddhi*, and on two occasions the “purity (*śuddhi*) of sattva” is referred to (YS 3.35, 55). In a sense, the expression “purity of sattva” is pleonastic, for *sattva* can itself stand for clarity and purity;²⁵ but when *sattva* is used in place of *buddhi*, then what is meant by its “purification” is presumably the cultivation of the ethical discipline, perceptual acuity and alertness that the Yoga system as a whole is intended to bring about.

“Subtlety” enters into the picture when we consider the kinds of things that can become objects of knowledge for the “purified” or “cultivated” buddhi. The advanced stages of Yoga practice are said to allow “subtle objects” (*sūkṣma-viṣayas*) to be the focus of sustained meditation (YS 1.44), and since “the unmanifest (*aliṅga*) is the ultimate object of subtlety” (YS 1.45), it may be inferred that the expression “subtle objects” here encompasses all, or most, of the manifest principles.²⁶ There are, of course, outstanding questions, such as how buddhi could become a meditative “object” if buddhi is itself the medium through which meditation occurs; but to try to resolve such questions here would take us too far off our main track. The immediate point to be made is that Sen Gupta’s claim, that increasing sattva increases subtlety, would be expressed more precisely if one were to say that, by means of the cultivation of the quality of purity, for which *sattva* (in most contexts) stands, increasingly difficult-to-comprehend (and hence “subtle”) aspects of the psychosensory apparatus are revealed to consciousness. This way of expressing the claim gives due weight, in my opinion, to the epistemological implications of “subtle”, and rightfully detracts from the ontological emphasis that is normally read into the term. In other words, “subtle” should be taken primarily to denote something about the object to be known *in relation to the knower*, not about the object as it is in itself.

²⁵ Hence Whicher’s appalling neologism “sattvification” (1998a: 122, and passim). Cf. Chapple’s “subtilization” (1996: 122–23).

²⁶ Vyāsa counts the tanmātras, ahaṃkāra, liṅgamātra, and aliṅga among the subtle objects, thereby apparently excluding manas, the ten indriyas, and the five bhūtas (YBh 1.45). Exclusion of the bhūtas is understandable, since it is generally in opposition to them (*qua* “gross” or *sthūla*) that “subtle” objects are defined; but there seems to be no good reason to leave out manas and the indriyas.

Now let us return to the issue that prompted the above discussion of the term “subtle”, which is that of how something physical (namely the *bhūtas*, and the macroscopic entities that they are held by many interpreters to constitute) can derive from something mental (namely *ahaṃkāra*). The standard account—according to which *ahaṃkāra* itself is in some peculiar sense “material”, as are the *tanmātras* which form the bridge between it and the *bhūtas*—is in my view, for reasons already given, incoherent.²⁷ My alternative to this account involves a radical recasting of the *tanmātras* and *bhūtas* as, no longer “subtle” and “gross” matter, but *modes of sensory content* and *perceptual forms of physical objects* respectively. A useful way of approaching an explanation of what I mean by these two expressions will be to consider how the five *tanmātras* are traditionally understood.

The *tanmātras* are not individually named in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* itself, but there is a consensus among the Sanskrit commentaries that the group of five comprises sound (*śabda*), contact (*sparsa*), form (*rūpa*), taste (*rasa*), and smell (*gandha*) (see e.g. Gauḍapāda, Vācaspati, and other traditional commentaries on SK 38). There should, therefore, be nothing controversial about my referring to the *tanmātras* as the five modes of sense-content, for that is precisely what they would seem to be.²⁸ What is at odds with the standard interpretation, however, is my view that the *tanmātras* can be understood as *merely* sense-content, and that there is no reason for them to be the kinds of “material essences” that Larson and others have assumed them to be.²⁹ Expressions such as “subtle element” and “primary element” are extremely common as translations of *tanmātra*,³⁰ and these can be justified by references to (a small number of) commentarial sources. Vyāsa, for example, distinguishes three grades of objects to be “grasped” in meditation, the first of which is *bhūta-sūkṣma* (“subtle element” or, slightly more literally, “subtle being”), and the other two of which are “gross support” (*sthūla-ālambana*) and “worldly divisions” (*viśva-bheda*, i.e. macroscopic objects) (*YBh* 1.41). The translation “subtle element” does not conflict with my interpretation of the *tanmātras*, as long as (*qua* sensory content) it is understood to mean a constitutive element of *sensations* and not

²⁷ The already-given reasons I have in mind here are: (a) the fact that *ahaṃkāra* is almost universally accepted to be the concept of self (or the event of ascribing such a concept *to* oneself), and hence cannot coherently be formulated as a material cause; and (b) the confusion that arises from regarding the *tanmātras* and *bhūtas* as real (in the sense of being mind-independent) while at the same time holding them to be derived from *ahaṃkāra*.

²⁸ The term “sense-data” would also be legitimate here, although since this term has become associated with a much-criticised epistemological approach (promoted in the twentieth century by Bertrand Russell, amongst others), I shall try to avoid unnecessary confusion by sticking with terms such as “sense-content”.

²⁹ “[The *tanmātras*] are [...] subtle, material essences or presuppositions with which perceptual and motor functioning correlate and through which certain aspects of the material world become differentiated” (Larson 1987: 50).

³⁰ Cf. MW (p. 434): “a rudimentary or subtle element”; Woods (1914: 91, 148–49, and *passim*): “fine element”; Eliade (1969: 21): “the five ‘subtle’ (potential) elements, the genetic seeds of the physical world.”

of physical entities; which understanding differs significantly from the common view that the tanmātras physically constitute—or “give rise to” “[b]y a process of condensation” (Eliade 1969: 21)—the bhūtas, which in turn physically constitute the entire external world, including our own bodies.³¹ My view of the relation between the tanmātras and bhūtas is, however, somewhat different, as I shall explain below.

As in the case of the tanmātras, the bhūtas, though not individually named in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, are universally agreed to be the five elements, namely: earth (*pṛthivī* or *kṣiti*); water (*ap*); fire (*tejas*); air (*vāyu* or *marut*); and *ākāśa* (or *vyoman*), which is normally translated these days as “space” (the older translation of “ether” having become outdated) (again, cf. commentaries on *SK* 38). The realist view—according to which the elements are physical atoms—has been adhered to by the majority of interpreters. Dasgupta typifies it when he asserts that “All gross things are formed by the collocation of the five atoms of *kṣiti*, *ap*, *tejas*, *marut*, and *vyoman*. The difference between one thing and another is simply this, that its collocation of atoms or the arrangement or grouping of atoms is different from that in another” (1922: 255). Normally it is implied that these atoms are, on their own, too small to be perceived, and hence that they are only “gross” in the sense that they are the constitutive elements of perceptible entities. There are, however, certain scholars who believe the bhūtas themselves to be perceptible. K. C. Bhattacharyya, for example, says with regard to Yoga that it “holds that bhūta emerges out of tanmātra in the form of *perceivable* sthūla [‘gross’, physical] atoms in the first instance, out of which again sthūla complex objects emerge as immanent pariṇāmas [transformations]” (1956 I: 243; emphasis and square brackets added).

Whether the bhūtas are perceptible or imperceptible, however, the view that takes them to be physical atoms is, I think, irredeemably flawed. For one thing, it requires us to ignore the fact that there are said to be only *five* bhūtas, and instead postulates an indefinite number, albeit divided into five *types*. But then, even if we allow the number five to refer to types rather than individuals, it remains far from clear why atomic particles should be referred to as “earth”, “water”, “fire”, “air”, and—most puzzling of all—“space”. Notwithstanding extravagant and ad hoc theories which have interpreted *ākāśa*, for example, as a “proto-atom” (whatever that might be),³² it must be admitted that, if the bhūta doctrine does concern atoms,

³¹ “[T]hese *tanmātras* give rise to atoms (*paramāṇu*) and molecules (*sthūlabhūtāni*; literally, ‘dense material particle’), which in turn give birth to vegetable organisms (*vrikṣa*) and animal organisms (*śarīra*). Thus man’s body, as well as his ‘states of consciousness’ and even his ‘intelligence,’ are all creations of one and the same substance” (Eliade 1969: 21).

³² “*Ākāśa* corresponds in some respects to the ether of the physicists and in others to what may be called proto-atom (protyle)” (B. N. Seal, quoted in Dasgupta 1922: 253 fn.1).

then the names given to these atoms are either extremely tenuously symbolic or else completely arbitrary.

But let us consider the names of the bhūtas a little more closely. What, for instance, could be meant by referring to something as “earth”? Surely earth, or soil, in the literal sense is something complex, composed of numerous and varied constitutive parts. *Prthivī* can also be understood, however, as “earth” in the sense of the ground upon which we stand—i.e. something hard, solid, dense. Thus, might not the first bhūta stand for solidity or hardness? And, similarly, *ap* might be understood as liquidity or fluidity rather than simply H₂O; *tejas* as light or heat; and *vāyu* as gaseousness. Having stepped aside from the assumption of atomism, when we come to *ākāśa* there is no need to think of it as anything other than space, although if we recall *Sāṃkhyasūtra* 2.12 (discussed in Chapter 5 above) then we might wish to regard it as covering time as well.³³

What I am proposing here is that the first four bhūtas can be most intelligibly understood, not as atoms, but as *forms of physical objects*, and that the fifth—ākāśa—can be regarded as the form of space (or forms of space and time), which is of course a necessary precondition for each of the others. By “forms of physical objects” I mean, essentially, the forms taken by physical objects *in our experience*, and do not mean to imply that the objects concerned are independent of that experience.

There is nothing especially novel about this kind of phenomenological interpretation of the bhūtas. In Abhidharma Buddhism, where four bhūtas (or *mahābhūtas*) are typically referred to—these being the same as in Sāṃkhya, only with ākāśa left out—it is fairly widely accepted. Herbert Guenther, for example, speaking of the Buddhist mahābhūtas, notes that “There are four such ‘great elementary qualities’: earth-, water-, fire-, and air-basis” (1974: 146),³⁴ and adds the following interesting remarks:

Their names have been derived from the ‘objects’ which common-sense assumes, although the Buddhists never had the association of objects in our sense of the word. ‘Earth’ is the symbolic expression for all that is solid and able to carry a load, ‘water’ for all that is fluid and cohesive, ‘fire’ for all that is light and moving. (Ibid.)³⁵

³³ Dasgupta explicitly rejects this line of interpretation, insisting that “solidity, liquidity and gaseousness represent only an impermanent aspect of matter” (whereas the bhūtas are the constituents of matter *per se*) (1924: 166). Having assumed Sāṃkhya to be staunchly realist, however, he could only consider solidity, etc., in terms of mind-independent states of physical entities, and thus was not in a position to comment upon the kind of phenomenologically-oriented interpretation that I am proposing.

³⁴ In a footnote Guenther cites the following passages from traditional Buddhist works: Buddhaghosa’s *Aṭṭhasālinī* 4.3; Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośa* 1.12; and Asaṅga’s *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, p. 3 (no bibliographical details are given concerning the editions of these works that have been used).

³⁵ Cf. Gethin (1986: 36): “What is clear [...] is the extent to which the early Buddhist account of rūpa [the collective term for the mahābhūtas] focusses on the physical world as experienced by a sentient being—the terms of reference are decidedly body-endowed-with-consciousness (*saviññānaka kāya*)” (my square brackets).

Nor am I the first to spot that this interpretive approach is equally applicable to Sāṃkhya. Jajneswar Ghosh did something very similar in his introductory essay to Āraṇya 1977. Of the *bhūtas*, in addition to the other manifest principles, suggests Ghosh, “it must be said that they are not extramental, since it is inconceivable, for instance, how a thing may be hard or soft without being felt as such” (1977: 7). The point here is the straightforwardly antirealist one that the qualities of objects cannot legitimately be imputed to any real external entity; they can be so imputed only to the objects *as experienced*, i.e. *within* and not *without* the mind or consciousness.³⁶ Ghosh is certainly on the right lines, in my opinion, but he does not finish the job of providing a coherent nonrealist account of how each of the manifest principles relates to the others. To provide such an account would, of course, be a highly ambitious project, and would necessarily involve the kind of imaginative “constructive effort” that K. C. Bhattacharyya refers to (1956 1: 127). In the remaining part of this chapter I will not attempt to give a complete account—for to do so would effectively involve an elaboration of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* in its entirety—but I shall go further than Ghosh in presenting a non-realist interpretation of the manifest principles we have been discussing, which will take us some way towards an explanation of the relations between them in terms of conditionality or dependence rather than material causality.

THE ANALYSIS OF EXPERIENCE

If we consider, as our starting-point, the question “What are the necessary preconditions for the arising of experience?”, then it can be shown that the principles of Sāṃkhya and Yoga metaphysics flow forth as a logical response to this question. Although the question itself is not stated explicitly in the classical texts, there is nothing arbitrary or inapposite about the suggestion that it represents a key entry-point into the metaphysical schema; for the fact that the soteriological orientation of Sāṃkhya and Yoga is founded upon the need to transcend suffering and dissatisfaction (*duḥkha*, SK 1; YS 2.16), combined with the analysis of experience as *inherently* dissatisfactory (YS 2.15) and rooted in misperception (*avidyā*, YS 2.24), necessitates that the sources of experience be disclosed and impeded, which in turn implies the asking of the very question I have posed.

³⁶ An interesting discussion of the mental origin of the forms of phenomena occurs in Kant’s *Inaugural Dissertation* of 1770 (section 4): “Objects do not strike the senses by their form. In order, therefore, that the various impressions from the object acting on the sense may coalesce into some whole of representation, there is required an inner principle of the mind through which in accordance with stable and innate laws that manifold may take on some form” (quoted in Kemp Smith 1992: 87).

One might suppose that the two most fundamental conditions of experience are a subject and an object, and in a sense this is indeed so. The Sāṃkhya analysis is a little more subtle, however, for it notes that the concept of an experiencing subject already presupposes certain prior conditions, and it is essentially these *conditions of the possibility of being a subject* that constitute, in my view, the metaphysical schema of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. The first condition is consciousness itself, or a “transcendental subject” abstracted from all specific experiential episodes. This is *puruṣa*. A further condition is something that can “bring forth” or “procreate” phenomena and present them to this transcendental subject. This is *prakṛti*.³⁷ The twenty-three principles that constitute the manifest aspect of *prakṛti* are derived from a detailed synchronic analysis of experience itself; they are, in other words, what underlies experience in general. The unmanifest aspect of *prakṛti*, with its three strands, is the irreducible foundation of these underlying factors; it is that which must be presupposed in each of them.

Although, on my interpretation, the Sāṃkhya analysis of experience is synchronic, it is designed to bring out relations of logical priority and subordination between certain of the constitutive factors, and this explains why these factors are presented *as though in a diachronic sequence*. *Buddhi*—or *mahat*, “the great”—is the logically first manifest principle because it stands for the very possibility of intentional consciousness. *Buddhi* is awareness *of something* considered in abstraction from any *particular* object of awareness.³⁸ *Ahaṃkāra*—the concept of egoity or self-formulation—is logically dependent upon *buddhi* because selfhood or ipseity can be defined and recognised only in relation to that which is not-self, and hence only in the presence of intentional consciousness; intentional consciousness being that which brings forth the phenomenal “other” or *ob-ject* (literally, “thrown against”). One could, of course, protest that the bringing forth of an object itself requires a self or subject, and that therefore it makes no sense to prioritise *buddhi* over *ahaṃkāra*. *Ahaṃkāra* is not, however, the metaphysical self; it is merely (as I have tried to emphasise already) the principle of self-individuation. The authentic self is *puruṣa*, although *puruṣa* cannot know itself to be that self, since, independently of phenomena, the contrast between self and not-self cannot arise.

³⁷ Jadunath Sinha tries to make a similar point: “According to the Sāṃkhya-Yoga, perception depends upon two metaphysical conditions. In the first place, it implies the existence of an extra-mental object. In the second place, it implies the existence of the self (*puruṣa*)” (1958 1: 124). His mistake is the one with which we are familiar from Chapter 4, i.e. that of conflating the *puruṣa*–*prakṛti* relation with the mind–world relation. (*Prakṛti*, whether considered in its manifest or unmanifest aspect, is *not* “an extra-mental object”!)

³⁸ Cf. Zimmer (1953: 320): “*Buddhi* comprises the totality of our emotional and intellectual possibilities.” K. C. Bhattacharyya comes close to appreciating this point when he states that “*buddhi* is the manifest as such” (1956 1: 274), but this statement fails to capture the intentional relatedness that, in my view, underlies the notion of *buddhi*.

“Rolling forth” (*pravartate*) from *ahaṃkāra* is the “twofold surgence” (*dvividhaḥ* [...] *sargaḥ*) of the ten *indriyas* plus *manas* on the one hand, and the five *tanmātras* on the other (*SK* 24). I take this to mean that the notion of egoity is a necessary precondition for one’s having sensations (*buddhīndriyas*) and performing actions (*karmendriyas*), and for being receptive to the sensory data (*tanmātras*) that constitute the objectual content of sensations, which is a point that has already been hinted at above (p. 153). We might note here the Kantian point that, strictly speaking, having a concept of self need not—indeed, ought not—be taken to imply that there is a “sense of egoity”, i.e. some mysterious feeling of being a self. The concept of an ego or self has no empirical content, but is, as Kant maintains, merely the fundamental presupposition or “vehicle” underlying all concepts and experiences (*CPuR* A338–44/B396–402). Egoity might be characterised as the appropriation of perceptual and conceptual experiences as “mine”. Experiences are had, and are accompanied by what Kant calls the “I think” (which notion is based on Descartes’s *cogito*); and this is very much what I take the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* to be referring to when it defines *ahaṃkāra* as “the thought of [being] a self” (*abhimāna*, *SK* 24).

At *kārikā* 34 the following statement is made concerning the relation between the *indriyas* and the *tanmātras*:

Of these [i.e. the ten *indriyas*], the five *buddhīndriyas* have specific and nonspecific objects [i.e. the *bhūtas* and *tanmātras*]. Speaking manifests (*bhavatī*) sound-phenomena [alone], whereas the remaining [*karmendriyas*] [manifest] all five [types of] phenomena.³⁹

The assertion that the *buddhīndriyas* have specific (*viśeṣa*) and nonspecific (*aviśeṣa*) objects requires some consideration. There is no problem in assuming that the terms *viśeṣa* and *aviśeṣa* refer to the *bhūtas* and *tanmātras* respectively, because at *kārikā* 38 it is in precisely these terms that the *bhūtas* and *tanmātras* are defined. The statement remains, however, ambiguous. One interpretation would be that there are two distinct kinds of sensory object, one “specific” (i.e. comprising the *bhūtas*) and the other “nonspecific” (i.e. comprising the *tanmātras*). An alternative interpretation, meanwhile, would be that every object is constituted by the two kinds of elements, namely specific and nonspecific. It is this second interpretation that seems to me most plausible in view of my understanding of the *bhūtas* as objectual “forms” and of the *tanmātras* as modes of sense-content. The five *tanmātras*—i.e. sound, tactility, visual image, flavour, and odour—ought not, in my view, to be regarded as objects in themselves; rather, they constitute the content of sensory objects.⁴⁰ It would, for example, be

³⁹ *buddhīndriyāṇi teṣāṃ pañca viśeṣāviśeṣaviśayāṇi / vāg bhavati śabdaviśayā śeṣāṇi tu pañca viśayāṇi //*

⁴⁰ Digambarji et al. seem to approximate this view when they define *tanmātrā* as “the matter of which the *Bhūtas* are said to be forms, the imperceptible matter of the perceptible material existence” (1989: 25). From

impossible to experience a mere sound without its being a sound of a particular kind, or a visual image “as such” without its being a particular visual image. This is why I reject the first interpretation of kārikā 34 that I mentioned above. The tanmātras cannot be sensory objects, because they are, in fact, *features* of sensory objects that, under analysis, have been abstracted from the objects themselves. In order to be experienced (*as sensation*) something must comprise both a nonspecific element—say, tactility or “feel” (*sparsā*) or visual appearance (*rūpa*)—and a specific form—say, hardness/solidity (*pṛthivī*) or luminosity (*tejas*). This is the point that I take the first distich of kārikā 34 to be making.

It should be noted that even the so-called “specific objects”—or, to be a little more precise, the specific *elements* of objects—are not specific enough to count as objects in the ordinary sense, i.e. as objects such as stones, or trees, or cats, or tables. Hardness combined with touch, for example, does not make a stone, although hardness and touch are both features of a sensory experience that we might ordinarily describe as “touching a stone”. Thus, although I have, in my translation of kārikā 34, adopted the standard practice of translating *viśeṣa-aviśeṣa-viśayāṇi* as “specific and nonspecific objects”, we should be careful to note that what is really being spoken about are relatively specific and nonspecific components of sensory objects, and that by “sensory object” here is meant, not a physical object or entity, but, in effect, the sensation itself. When we speak in English of an experience such as touching a stone, we might say that the stone felt hard, or that I had the sensation of hardness. Whilst, under most circumstances, these two ways of speaking may be understood as equivalent statements, under closer inspection we see that the former attributes hardness to the stone whereas the latter attributes it to the sensation. I think that this same ambiguity—or something very close to it—exists in Sanskrit, and is responsible for the fact that kārikā 34 refers to specific and nonspecific *objects* of sensation, when in fact an expression such as “specific and nonspecific *components* of sensations” would be equally valid. There is, therefore, no support for the view that Sāṃkhya takes a realist attitude to physical entities to be gained from this kārikā.

When it comes to the second distich of kārikā 34, I have translated *viśayā* and *viśayāṇi* as “phenomena” rather than “objects” because the phrase “speaking manifests sound-phenomena” is both less cumbersome, and in my view closer to the sense, of *vāg bhavati śabdaviśayā* than would be an expression such as “speaking has sound-objects as its manifestation”, but the difference is fairly minor. I reject, incidentally, translations such as Larson’s

other statements that they make, however, it would appear that they are using “matter” in a realist sense here, to mean something physically real, rather than merely the content of sensations. (For example, referring to ahaṃkāra, the tanmātras and the bhūtas, they say: “They are all matter in the sense in which we understand this word today” (ibid.), which presumably means the sense in which *mainstream science* understands it.)

“Speech only has sound as its object” (1979: 266), since this causes an unnecessary confusion. We might say that *hearing* has sound as its object, or that speech *produces* sound, but it seems nonsensical to say that speech has sound as its object. Similarly, I do not see any sense in saying of the remaining karmendriyas—namely, grasping, walking, excreting, and engaging in sexual activity—that they have as their objects sound, touch, visual appearance, taste, and odour (i.e. the five tanmātras). While it seems reasonable to describe speech as “manifesting” sound—the relevant verb here being *bhavati*, which can also mean “exists; is; becomes” (Killingley 1997: 234)—the other karmendriyas do not, it must be admitted, relate to the tanmātras in quite such an obvious way. They can, however, be held to *involve* these five modes of sensory content, at least in the case of someone whose five senses are all in working order. One might quibble that grasping, walking and excreting do not directly involve sound, taste or smell; but if we think of the karmendriyas more generally—as simply varieties of physical activity—then it becomes more plausible to see them as intimately associated with sense-content, even if the precise nature of the relationship remains undefined.

Although a great deal more could be said about each of the manifest principles—or “conditioning factors of experience” as we can now call them—I think the above account is sufficient to substantiate my claim that the metaphysical schema presented in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* is most coherently interpreted as a synchronic analysis of the necessary conditions of experience rather than as a diachronic cosmogony.⁴¹ One further question that might be asked, and upon which I shall offer some thoughts in the next section, is: “What use is such an analysis to Sāṃkhya and Yoga—how does it fit into the broader soteriological orientation of these darśanas?”

THE SOTERIOLOGICAL RELEVANCE OF THE METAPHYSICAL SCHEMA

The question of how metaphysics and soteriology are related in Sāṃkhya and Yoga has certainly bemused a number of interpreters who have given it anything approaching the degree of attention it deserves. We saw early on in this chapter that Radhakrishnan found it “difficult to

⁴¹ J. N. Mohanty seems to have had a similar idea, for he remarks in one place that “an Indian philosopher [...] may turn to western philosophy in order to make sense of some obscure doctrine in Indian thought. For example, one may make sense of the Sāṃkhya order of evolution by invoking some parts of Kantian epistemology” (2001: 86–87). He makes the remark, however, merely *en passant* and does not follow it up. Braj Sinha, too, recognises that “Sāṃkhya-Yoga is primarily an attempt at a transcendental analysis of the facts of human experience” (1983: 17), but he limits his study to time and temporality (comparing the Sāṃkhya-Yoga conception with that of Abhidharma Buddhism), and does not provide a general account of the metaphysical principles.

understand the precise significance of the Sāṃkhya account of evolution” (1927 II: 274). Larson expresses a similar point, but with a little more specificity:

On the one hand, we are told that *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra*, *manas*, the senses, etc. evolve or emerge one after another. At the same time we are told that the *liṅga*[*] transmigrates from life to life. [...] [T]he theory of evolution has very little to do with the problem of salvation, since in any given life, evolution is already accomplished before that particular life begins. [...] Clearly the exposition of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* on this point leaves much to be desired. (1979: 196; my under-scoring. *The *liṅga* is said at *SK* 40 to comprise “mahat, etc., down to [and including] the subtle”, which is generally taken to mean all of the manifest principles except the *bhūtas*)

It would be harsh not to have some sympathy for Larson in his state of bewilderment, but if he is looking for the soteriological significance of a metaphysical schema to be spelt out in black and white, then a dense and cryptic document produced by an esoteric branch of Indian philosophy such as the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* is hardly the place to find it. What the interpretation of such a document requires is a degree of familiarity with the discipline of Yoga, i.e. with sustained introspective meditation and the states of awareness that result from it. As I noted in the Introduction, I do not wish to claim for myself access to any secret and authoritative knowledge in this regard, but I have gained enough experience of the theoretical and practical aspects of Yoga to understand that the principal purpose of this discipline is to engender a state of consciousness in which identification with all phenomenal processes has been relinquished and the phenomenal processes themselves have withered away (due, as it were, to their supply of nourishment having been suspended). Perhaps a brief summary of the rationale behind Yoga practice would be helpful here.

Roughly speaking, an object—whether it be a visual one such as a symbolic diagram (*yantra*) or an auditory one such as a mantra—is concentrated upon incessantly until single-pointed attention (*dhāraṇā*) is achieved (*YS* 3.1). Such attention may endure for some time, which state is generally referred to as meditation (*dhyāna*, *YS* 3.2), before the distinction between the meditating subject and the object meditated upon dissolves and a state of mental “absorption” (*samādhi*) ensues, in which the “object alone” (*artha-mātra*) is said to “shine forth” (*nirbhāsa*) (*YS* 3.3, cf. 1.43). In my experience, limited as it may be, the state of initial absorption is not the *terminus ad quem* of Yoga, nor is it claimed to be such in the *Yogasūtra* and other traditional texts. Rather, it is the *terminus a quo* for a deeper level of enquiry and self-understanding.

What can, on occasions, happen next is that the object itself fades away, leaving the mind in a state of pleasant emptiness; and, despite the cessation of ordinary discursive mental activity, it is possible within this very state of (relative) tranquillity, to achieve certain kinds of insight into, or knowledge about, the nature of the mind and its operations. According to various

passages in the *Yogasūtra*, there are several distinct stages or levels of samādhi (or *samāpatti*), and some of these are held to involve an awareness of the ordinarily imperceptible (i.e. “subtle”) aspects of the “seen” (*dṛśya*, i.e. prakṛti).⁴² One pole of the discipline of Yoga involves holding these aspects (or whatever the object of meditation may be) steady, the practice of this stabilisation being known as *abhyāsa* (YS 1.13). The other pole is *vairāgya*, the non-attachment to or dissociation from the object of knowledge; or, in other words, the cultivation of the inner knowingness that, in the case of each psychosensory aspect that becomes present to awareness, I (as transcendental self or pure consciousness) am *not that* (cf. YS 1.15–16). Such knowingness is prefigured in the famous Upaniṣadic utterance *neti neti* (*na-iti na-iti*), “not this, not this” (see e.g. *Bṛhad.Up* II.3.6; III.9.26; IV.2.4; etc.), and is given expression at *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 64 as puruṣa’s awareness that “I am not (*na-asmi*), not mine (*na me*), not ‘I’ (*na-aham*).” Larson interprets this latter passage as buddhi’s assertion that “I am not (conscious); (consciousness) does not belong to me; the ‘I’ is not (conscious)” (1979: 274), but this is to turn the meaning of the kārikā upside-down. There are, admittedly, significant difficulties attached to any ascription of knowledge—even a merely negative, dissociative kind of knowledge—to a transcendental principle such as puruṣa; for it seems paradoxical to suggest that transcendental consciousness can “know” itself to be distinct from the very cognitive apparatus that, under normal circumstances, *make knowledge possible*. But this is the sort of problem that inevitably arises in connection with attempts to describe mystical (i.e. supra-ratiocinative) states of consciousness, and is far from being uniquely associated with Sāṃkhya and Yoga. Larson’s alternative suggestion, it should be noted, is at least equally paradoxical, since it involves an essentially non-conscious principle (namely, buddhi) having knowledge—which can only mean *becoming conscious of the fact*—that it is *not* conscious!

Since the goal of Sāṃkhya and Yoga is the self-abiding or “aloneness” (*kaivalya*) of puruṣa, the achievement of which goal requires a cessation of puruṣa’s false identification with that which is not-self (*anātman*, cf. YS 2.5 and 25), the knowledge of the ultimate disjunction between puruṣa and prakṛti must *belong* to puruṣa, even if in some sense that knowl-

⁴²Two main schemata of meditative absorption are presented in the *Yogasūtra*. The first (at YS 1.17–18) distinguishes between cognitive (*samprajñāta*-) samādhi and the “other” (*anya*) type, which is generally (following Vyāsa) taken to be “supra-cognitive” (*asamprajñāta*-) samādhi. Cognitive samādhi is subdivided into four modes: (1) “contemplative” (*vitarka*); (2) “refined contemplative” (*vicāra*); (3) “blissful” (*ānanda*); and (4) “mere egoic” (*asmitā*, literally “I-am-ness”). The second schema refers to samādhi “with seed” (*sabīja*, YS 1.46) and “without seed” (*nirbīja*, YS 1.51), the former type being subdivided (at YS 1.42–44) into (1) “absorption with contemplation” (*savitarka-samāpatti*), (2) “~ without contemplation” (*nirvitarka-samāpatti*), (3) “with refined contemplation” (*savicāra-samāpatti*), and (4) “~ without refined contemplation” (*nirvicāra-samāpatti*). The two schemata, though differing in certain respects, share the basic structure of a system of gradual progression.

edge can only arise via (i.e. by means of) puruṣa's association with buddhi.⁴³ The aforementioned passage in kārikā 64 is, in my view, an attempt to represent the dawning of puruṣa's disidentification with experience itself. It is, so to speak, the “last gasp” of experience—i.e. of subject-object duality—before the “seer” (*draṣṭṛ/puruṣa*, defined as “mere seeing” (*dṛśimātra*), *YS* 2.20) “abides in its own nature” (*YS* 1.3).

Taking the above discussion of Yoga discipline into account, then, I can see two main interpretive options concerning the soteriological relevance of Sāṃkhya's metaphysical schema. One is that it constitutes a report of meditative experience, i.e. an exposition of the insights gained into the nature of the mind and its processes during states of samādhi. A second possibility is that the schema was devised in advance of meditative experience via a process of transcendental analysis, analogous to that used by Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. As Kant impressively demonstrated, it is possible to enquire into the necessary conditions of experience by means of reason alone, and to construct an elaborate schema of *a priori* principles without the need for introspective verification. In the case of Sāṃkhya, the schema could have been rationally constructed and then utilised as a tool or “map” for the meditating yogin.

This idea of the practical use of metaphysical schemata is not a new one. As was noted in Chapter 2, Feuerstein talks of “ontogenetic models” as “originally and primarily maps for meditative introspection, intended to guide the *yogin* in his exploration of the *terra incognita* of the mind” (1980: 117). However, so entrenched is Feuerstein in his view that Sāṃkhya is wholly “rationalistic” while Yoga eschews such methods and relies exclusively “on first-hand evidence (*pratyakṣa*)” (ibid.) that he fails to consider the possibility that a model, though rationally-devised, may nevertheless perform an instructive or guiding role in meditation. When, therefore, he asserts that “These ‘maps’ are records of internal experiences rather than purely theoretical constructions” and “are descriptive rather than explanatory” (ibid.), we are left wondering how a system such as Sāṃkhya, with its “pronouncedly formalistic and rationalistic basis” (ibid.: 113), was able to come up with a metaphysical schema which so closely parallels that of Yoga.

There is, in my view, no need to drive a wedge between the two interpretive options I have outlined. It is perfectly tenable, and indeed highly likely, that reason and introspection have been mutually reinforcing devices in the history of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and that the respective

⁴³ Another crucial kārikā in this regard is number 37, where it is said that, due to buddhi's being responsible for “bringing about” (*sādhayati*) all experience, it is thus also buddhi that “discloses (*viśiṇaṣṭi*) the subtle [difference] in (*antara*, i.e. between) pradhāna and puruṣa.” Larson translates *viśiṇaṣṭi* as “distinguishes” (1979: 267), thereby implying that buddhi is the subject of knowledge. Davies, similarly, renders it as “discriminates” (1894: 72). Other possible translations, however, such as “exposes” (Jhā 1896: 77), “reveals” (Suryanarayana Sastri 1948: 68), and my “discloses” may be taken to represent buddhi merely as the medium of knowledge, not its possessor.

schemata of these systems are both descriptive *and* explanatory. They describe, in what is evidently a highly abstracted and abbreviated manner, observations made through sustained inwardly-oriented contemplation; and, at the same time, they are supported at certain points by arguments that appeal to the rational proclivities of the student or would-be adherent of the system, who has perhaps yet to enjoy the “first-hand evidence” that will later (if the “map” is followed correctly) verify the teachings.

In this chapter, then, we have looked in some detail at the metaphysics of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and I have proposed what I consider to be a more credible alternative to the common cosmogonic interpretation of the metaphysical principles (which now turn out to be transcendental conditions of experience). In the next (penultimate) chapter our attention will be focused upon the *eschatos* of these systems, namely “aloneness” (*kaivalya*), and I shall argue that, while interpretations that impute realism to Sāṃkhya and Yoga run into intractable difficulties when they try to explain this final destination, the non-realist interpretative line that I have taken leads to more satisfactory results.

Freedom from Experience

[L]ife cannot be an end in itself, [...] the true purpose of our existence lies beyond it.
(Schopenhauer 1974b II: 347)

SĀMĀKHYA AND YOGA are not concerned with philosophy for its own sake. Like virtually all classical systems of thought in India, they were devised with a soteriological purpose in mind. This purpose is the attainment of release or liberation (*mokṣa*, *mukṭi*) from mundane existence, such existence being held, again by most Indian systems, to be inherently and irredeemably dissatisfactory.

The soteriological *telos* of Sāṃkhya and Yoga has, I hope, been an underlying presence throughout this study, for it certainly warrants being taken into account throughout the interpretive process. In this chapter I want to focus a little more sharply upon that telos, or *artha* (“end”, “purpose”), referred to in both the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and the *Yogasūtra* as *kaivalya*, which term translates literally as “aloneness” or “solitariness”. In particular I wish to enquire into how the vision of this goal and the aspiration to achieve it cohere with the aspects of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophies that have been discussed so far. I shall be proposing that the realist–cosmogonic interpretation of these darśanas has no way of accounting for *kaivalya*, and that any attempt to explain it that begins from the realist assumption regarding the manifestations of *prakṛti* can result only in confusion.

There is a sense, of course, in which *kaivalya* is radically inexplicable by any theory, for it does not fall within the domain of conceptual thought. Perhaps the greatest paradox, or at least irony, of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and of other essentially mystical soteriologies, is their claim that the liberation of the person involves, in effect, forsaking everything that marks one out as a person in the first place, including body, mind, memory, and intentional consciousness itself. Notwithstanding this ultimately supra-rational orientation, however, it is not the case that anything goes when it comes to discussing *kaivalya*. It remains, I think, possible to distinguish between more and less plausible accounts, the main criterion for doing so being the extent to which any particular account succeeds in positioning *kaivalya* in relation to the philosophies as integral wholes. This is not to say that the interpretation should be fudged in order to *make* it compatible with other elements in the systems. Close attention must be given to the texts at all times, and any inconsistencies pointed out. But a reasonable interpretive starting-

point—indeed, probably the only genuinely workable starting-point—is to assume a high level of integrity on the parts of the systems concerned, and, from that basis, to piece them together in a way that utilises the light from one element to illuminate others.

As was noted towards the end of the previous chapter, the metaphysical schema of Sāṃkhya and Yoga represents the conditioning factors of experience, which have to be systematically disidentified with in the process of disclosing one's authentic identity. I shall argue in this chapter that, despite a number of important conceptual difficulties, the most appropriate way of interpreting the soteriological goal of these darśanas is as a state of consciousness that has been stripped of all experiential content, and of any possibility of a resuscitation of phenomenal engagement, the need for such engagement having been entirely transcended.

THE CENTRAL INTERPRETIVE PROBLEM OF KAIVALYA

The central problem regarding the interpretation of kaivalya in Sāṃkhya and Yoga for anyone who accepts the realist assumption is as follows. Kaivalya, according to both darśanas, involves the cessation of mental activity. This is made explicit in the *Yogasūtra*, where the very definition of *yoga* is given as “the cessation (*nirodha*) of mental activities (*citta-vṛtti*)” (YS 1.2), and it is implied in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* by the fact that kaivalya is there said to be attained upon puruṣa's “split with the body” (*śarīra-bheda*) and the “retreat from activity (*vinivṛtta*) of pradhāna,” whose purpose (*artha*) has been accomplished (SK 68). Not only, then, does the mind cease to operate, but the entire world of ostensibly physical objects dissolves, leaving only an unmanifest, and thus no longer active, prakṛti, plus of course the now solitary puruṣa, which abides purely “in its own nature (*svarūpa*)” (YS 1.3). Since the attainment of kaivalya by one individual does not entail or engender the dissolution of the mental activities of other individuals, nor of the world those others experience, there would seem to be something about that dissolution that is particular to the kaivalyin alone (cf. YS 2.22).

The realist interpreter faces a dilemma. If the manifestations of prakṛti are really independent of puruṣa, as he supposes, then how can it be the case that they cease or dissolve for the kaivalyin? One of two things must be implied. Either (*a*) the manifestations do not *really* dissolve at all, but merely disappear from the “view” or “awareness” of the liberated puruṣa; the puruṣa has, as it were, withdrawn its gaze from them and become enclosed or absorbed within its own being (“it contemplates itself” (Eliade 1969: 93)). Or (*b*) the manifestations were not independent after all, but were critically dependent upon an absence of self-knowledge on the

part of puruṣa, and hence when that self-knowledge arises the manifestations no longer exist in relation to that puruṣa, even though they do for others.

Each of these interpretive options is accompanied by serious difficulties, and this is perhaps why most interpretations tend not to be very explicit when it comes to the issue of kaivalya. The first option [a] entails that kaivalya consists in a divestment of knowledge—a self-imposed exile or hibernation from reality—in which puruṣa remains cut off from a world that continues to operate in its absence. This would be perfectly compatible with the negative aspect of the goal of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, i.e. the escape from the distress (*duḥkha*) that saturates worldly existence. But it would hardly concur with the positive aspect, which is expressed in the many proclamations to the effect that the path that leads from enthrallment to emancipation is one of increasing discriminative knowledge and awareness, not a shielding of oneself from that which is real and true. It would also contradict assertions that it is the manifestations of prakṛti that withdraw or retreat from view, and not puruṣa who blocks them out. The withdrawal is referred to as *pratiprasava* (YS 4.34), a “return to the original state” (MW: 668) or “flowing back to the source”; or as *prakṛtilaya* (SK 45), the “dissolution of [or into] prakṛti”; neither of which terms suggest that the manifestations in fact continue more or less as they are, only without being “seen” by puruṣa. In the poetic imagery of Īśvarakṛṣṇa’s text, it is the tender and bashful (*sukumāra*) prakṛti who, having performed her dance for puruṣa, “never again enters into puruṣa’s sight” (SK 59–61).

What we therefore tend to find in the interpretive literature are vague and unelaborated statements about kaivalya’s being a “pure isolation or abstraction [...] from matter” (Davies 1894: 48), which leave us unsure whether, once such a state has been attained, material objects are supposed to continue existing or not. Their continuing existence might be implied in Larson’s description of kaivalya as “a kind of pure, translucent emptiness which transcends everything in the manifest and unmanifest world” (1979: 208), but again it is left unexplicit whether this transcendence leaves the manifest world unscathed.

A further kind of hedging in this interpretive area is to speak of kaivalya’s involving the cessation of the *relation* between puruṣa and prakṛti without specifying whether this cessation necessitates the discontinuance of manifest objects. Keith, for example, makes this move when he notes that “the connection of spirit with matter terminates with the withdrawal of spirit into a condition of absolute freedom, which must, however, at the same time be absolute nonentity” (Keith 1949: 99). The free puruṣa may indeed be in a state of “nonentity” from the standpoint of our ordinary mundane existence, just as this latter existence must be absolute

nonentity from the standpoint of the free *puruṣa*.¹ There is (or should be) no question that the two spheres are rent asunder in *kaivalya*, but there *is* a question of whether—or, rather, in what sense—this rending coincides with the obliteration of *prakṛti*’s manifest aspect; and this question remains unaddressed by statements about the termination of the *relation* (or “connection”).

There is general agreement (except in rare cases such as Ian Whicher—see next section) that, in *kaivalya*, *experience* has been obliterated: “It is the enstasis of total emptiness,” as Eliade puts it, “without sensory content or intellectual structure, an unconditioned state that is no longer ‘experience’ (for there is no further relation between consciousness and the world) but ‘revelation’” (1969: 93). But—to reiterate the crucial question with regard to realism—what we wish to know is: In the absence of the “relation between consciousness and the world”, does there remain any objective (real, independent) world at all? Feuerstein, for one, proposes in certain places that there does. His boldest (we might say most reckless) assertion to this effect comes in his commentary on *Yogasūtra* 2.22. He translates the *sūtra* itself as follows:

Although [the seen] has ceased [to exist] for [the *yogin* whose] purpose has been accomplished, it has nevertheless not ceased [to exist altogether], since it is common-experience [with respect to all] other [beings]. (Feuerstein 1979a: 74; Feuerstein’s brackets)

Feuerstein then supplies the following assessment of the *sūtra*:

This aphorism is as plain a refutation of mentalism as one can expect. The world is not a mere thought product which dissolves upon liberation. Objects are external to the mind and have their independent existence which is not affected by the event of Self-realisation. Emancipation is an individual achievement which abolishes man’s false organismic identity and re-locates him into the Self. With the destruction of the consciousness complex the possibility of perceiving the external world, or perceiving the world externally, is likewise eliminated. But this absence of empirical perception does not conjure away the universe. It remains as real as before and continues to be experienced by those who erroneously identify not with the transcendental Self but with the phenomenal consciousness of a particular organism in space and time. Without this ontological assumption of the reality of the objective universe the emancipation of the very first liberated being would, logically, have entailed the annihilation of the cosmos and, by further implication, it would also have meant the emancipation of all other beings. (Ibid.)

The *sūtra* provides a “refutation of mentalism” (by which expression I take Feuerstein to mean a denial of idealism) only if one has already assumed that the Yoga position is realist. If this assumption has not been made, then the *sūtra* could very well be read as an *affirmation* of idealism, since it emphasises the dependence of the “seen” (manifest *prakṛti*, *dṛśya*) upon the “seer” (*puruṣa*, *draṣṭṛ*). What I wish to draw attention to here, however, is Feuerstein’s assertion that, “With the destruction of the consciousness complex the possibility of perceiving the

¹ Cf. Schopenhauer 1966 I: 411–12, which passage will be discussed briefly in the final section of this chapter.

external world [...] is likewise eliminated” even though the world “remains as real as before”. Feuerstein uses “consciousness” as a translation of *citta* (preferring “Self” for *puruṣa*, as can be seen in the above commentary); and thus by “consciousness complex” he probably means the cognising components of *prakṛti* (i.e. the thirteenfold instrument (*karana*) as it is called at SK 32). Its dissociation from *puruṣa*—or, as Feuerstein puts it, its “destruction”—would of course render external perception (and any kind of experience or cognition) impossible; and therefore this “destruction” establishes an unbridgeable gap between *puruṣa* and the “external world” (which world Feuerstein elsewhere refers to as the “surface structure” of *prakṛti* as distinct from the “deep structure”, which is the psychosensory constitution of the empirical self (1980: 29)). *Puruṣa* has, in effect, been separated from the “real world”, and hence its liberation involves a kind of voluntary ignorance, which, as I have already intimated, is in stark contradiction to the overall gnostic orientation of Yoga and Sāṃkhya.

Let us now give a little further attention to the second interpretive option [*b*] that I outlined above, viz. the view that the manifestations of *prakṛti* are *not* independent of *puruṣa* and hence do in fact dissolve in relation to the liberated *puruṣa*, though not for others. It might be presumed that this view entails the abandonment of the realist assumption and would therefore be unacceptable to any interpreter who holds that assumption. This would indeed be the case if such interpreters were consistent in their understanding of the relation between “manifest *prakṛti*” on the one hand and the “manifest world” on the other. The fact that they are not consistent on this point, however, enables the claim that manifest *prakṛti* *does* dissolve (disintegrate, demanifest, etc.) to be combined either with an insinuation that this dissolution does not include the “manifest world” or with a noncommittal silence about the fate of this world. Feuerstein’s distinction, which I mentioned in the last paragraph, between the “deep structure” and “surface structure” of *prakṛti* allows him, as we have seen, to speak of “the destruction of the consciousness complex” (i.e. manifest *prakṛti* as “deep structure”) while affirming the unbroken endurance of the “external world” (manifest *prakṛti* as “surface structure”).

Thus we see that what I have referred to as two interpretive options can in fact be merged into one, but only by employing the disingenuous strategy of distinguishing two structural modes of manifest *prakṛti*. The strategy is disingenuous because it flagrantly ignores the fact that, according to any interpretation of Yoga and Sāṃkhya metaphysics (including the realist–cosmogonic one), the objects that populate the “external world” *derive* from those which constitute the cognising personality (or “consciousness complex” in Feuerstein’s expression). The sense in which they so “derive” may be a matter of contention, but the fact that the

“surface structure” of objects *could not exist without* the “deep structure” of the psychosensory apparatus is undisputed. This fact ought to rule out any assertion that, for Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the objects we ordinarily perceive can continue to exist once kaivalya has been attained, and ought, furthermore, to make it patently clear that the perceived objects are, according to these darśanas, merely appearances *for us*, without (as a Buddhist might say) any “inherent existence” (*svabhāva*).

It is, in short, impossible to square any claim that in kaivalya the yogin’s mind and/or body dissolves or merges into unmanifest prakṛti with the view that material objects exist independently of their being cognised. Thus, when Feuerstein says, at the beginning of his commentary on *Yogasūtra* 4.34, that, “Upon Self-realisation, the primary-constituents of Nature [i.e. the *guṇas*] [...] cease to vibrate in the pattern characteristic of the *yogin*’s body and mind complex and become resolved into the unmanifest core (*prakṛti-pradhāna* = *aliṅga*)” (1979a: 145; Feuerstein’s rounded parentheses, my square brackets), we are entitled to wonder what has happened to the mind-independent objects that he referred to earlier. We might wonder the same thing when Sen Gupta (who, as we saw in Chapter 4, is firmly in favour of a realist interpretation) states that, “As soon as *citta* gets merged in the *guṇas*, the vital function too stops automatically and the yogi is separated forever from the body” (1982: 139), or when Eliade remarks that “Intellect (*buddhi*), having accomplished its mission, withdraws, detaching itself from the *puruṣa* and returning into *prakṛti*” (1969: 93).

It would seem fair to conclude, then, that the realist–cosmogonic interpretation of Sāṃkhya and Yoga stands no chance of presenting an intelligible account of kaivalya, and this is indeed the conclusion that I will draw. Before we can be sure of this, however, there is one further realist interpretive option that ought to be considered, which is based upon a radical and somewhat renegade re-reading of some key tenets of the Yoga system.

IAN WHICHER’S VIEW OF KAIVALYA AS “EMBODIED LIBERATION”

I noted at the beginning of the last section that the central problem for the realist interpretation of kaivalya is how to account for the fact that, according to Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the cessation of mental activities coincides with (or immediately precipitates) a dissolution of manifest entities, when those entities are supposed by the realist to exist independently of any experience of them. We have so far considered approaches that either skirt the issue or, in blatant contradiction of the texts, baldly declare that despite the dissolution of the psychosensory aspects of manifest prakṛti the “external world” persists. In recent years, however, a third approach has been articulated, in embryonic form by Christopher Chapple (see esp. 1996) and more fully by

Ian Whicher (1995, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, and elsewhere). Essentially the approach involves a tentative (in the case of Chapple) or surprisingly forthright (in the case of Whicher) denial that kaivalya—as understood in classical Yoga—forecloses the possibility of mental activity and experience of an objective physical reality.

It should be noted at the outset that both Chapple and Whicher draw a distinction between Sāṃkhya and Yoga with regard to the goal of these darśanas. Chapple holds that there is only “a slightly different interpretation of liberation” between the two systems (1996: 124), and that it amounts to little more than a matter of emphasis, with Yoga tending to place greater stress than Sāṃkhya upon “the need for ongoing purification both on the path and at the penultimate phase of the quest for liberation” (p. 132). Whicher, on the other hands, regards the difference as more significant. He concurs with the common view that, for Sāṃkhya, kaivalya involves a total separation of puruṣa and prakṛti (1998a: 58), but makes the curious assertion that Yoga, far from wanting to separate them, in fact “seeks to ‘unite’ these two principles by correcting a misalignment between them, thereby properly aligning them, bringing them ‘together’ through a purification and illumination of consciousness leading to the permanent realization of intrinsic being, that is, authentic identity.” “Moreover,” Whicher continues, “[...] Patañjali’s Yoga *darśana* can be seen to embrace a maturation and full flowering of human nature and identity, a state of embodied liberation—one that incorporates a clarity of awareness with the integrity of being and action” (1998a: 4; my underscoring). This is curious indeed, and hence it is fair to wonder what textual justification Whicher brings forth in support of this highly contentious interpretation, and also what exactly he might mean by such phrases as “embodied liberation” and “integrity of being and action”. (From here I shall focus on Whicher’s rather than Chapple’s position, since it is the more explicit and radical of the two.)

Whicher’s interpretation of classical Yoga appears to be largely constructed upon a translation of *Yogasūtra* 1.2 that is unique to himself. The sūtra, which has already been referred to in this chapter, reads: *yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ*; and Whicher translates this as “Yoga is the cessation of [the misidentification with] the modifications of the mind” (1998a: 1, cf. 1995: 47). The expression inserted in brackets by Whicher is fundamental to his interpretation, and yet he does not attempt to justify its inclusion. Rather, he asserts it and then proceeds to examine the entire Yoga darśana in the light of this assertion, as though his translation of the aforementioned sūtra were uncontroversial. It is, however, extremely controversial, for it allows Whicher to claim that the goal of Yoga is not to induce the cessation of mental activities or “modifications of the mind” (*citta-vṛtti*) themselves, but consists merely in the cessation of

misidentification with those activities. The implication of Whicher's translation of this crucial sūtra is therefore that mental activities (states, perceptions, thoughts) can continue *after* the attainment of Yoga's goal, albeit in the absence of any misidentification with those activities or the mind itself.

The practice of inserting bracketed expressions into translations of the *Yogasūtra* (and similar Indian texts) is extremely common among scholars, the justification being that without such insertions the meanings of the sūtras concerned would be either highly opaque, unnecessarily ambiguous, or entirely unintelligible. The practice should, however, be treated with extreme caution, both by the translator and by the reader, for the risk of imposing a meaning upon the text that was unintended in the original is significant. When a sūtra is perfectly intelligible without any amendments then the insertion of additional wording is superfluous at best, and misleading at worst. Now, in the case of *Yogasūtra* 1.2, the sūtra provides a definition of *yoga* as *citta-vṛtti-nirodha*. Whicher, reasonably, translates the latter expression as "the cessation of the modifications of the mind," but then completely changes its meaning by inserting "[the misidentification with]" after "the cessation of".

In accordance with his general emphasis on misidentification, Whicher's vision of the goal of Yoga is one in which the yogin is liberated from a false sense of identity but not from the world as such. "[K]aivalya", says Whicher, "in no way presupposes the destruction or negation of the personality of the yogin, but is an unconditional state in which all the obstacles or distractions preventing an immanent and purified relationship or engagement of person with nature and spirit (*puruṣa*) have been removed" (1998a: 277). The issue of identity is deeply confused here, for it would appear that the yogin "engages" with *puruṣa*, which is not at all the same as *being* *puruṣa*. Indeed, to engage with something precludes one's being that thing. Since, on most accounts, kaivalya consists in *puruṣa*'s realising *itself*, it seems far from clear that, in Whicher's version, the yogin's misidentification has been entirely eradicated. Whicher adds to the confusion by asserting that *nirodha* ("cessation") need not "imply being rooted in a conception of oneself that abstracts from one's identity as a social, historical, and embodied being" (1998a: 291). Contrary to this interpretation, I think it is glaringly obvious that Yoga proposes a methodological strategy of renunciation, which involves the relinquishment of identification with *precisely* the social, historical, and bodily characteristics that Whicher mentions.

There is, it should be noted, a precedent for the conception of an embodied state of liberation within Sāṃkhya and Yoga, but it occurs in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* rather than the *Yogasūtra*. Kārikā 67 refers to a state in which "direct knowledge" (*samyagjñāna*) has been attained and

yet bodily existence continues due to the impulsion of *saṃskāras*, these being the impressions from past experiences that are retained in the mind unconsciously (allegedly over several lifetimes²) until the appropriate opportunity arises for them to manifest as mental activity. The simile used at *kārikā* 67 is that of a potter's wheel, which continues to spin for a while due to its momentum even after the pot has been thrown.³ Once the *saṃskāras* have manifested and thereby extinguished themselves, however, the body dies and *kaivalya* is instantiated, which state is “both singular (*aikāntika*) and conclusive (*ātyantika*)” (*SK* 68).

Although no reference is made in the *Yogasūtra* to an intermediate state of enlightened embodiment that precedes the final separation from corporeal existence in *kaivalya*, there is no reason to suppose that the view of classical Yoga is significantly different to that of classical Sāṃkhya; and, as we have seen, this view is that embodiment lasts only as long as there are psychic impulses engendering activity, and that once the state of supreme awareness has been achieved these psychic impulses dry up, thereby precipitating disembodiment.

That both Sāṃkhya and Yoga conceive *kaivalya* to be a disembodied state is, I think, clearly evident from the classical texts. A body, being part of the physical environment, is thoroughly dependent upon the manifestation of *prakṛti*; and, as the *Yogasūtra* and *Sāṃkhyakārikā* insist, *puruṣa*'s aloneness coincides with the return of *prakṛti* and its three constituents to their original unmanifest homeostasis, their purpose having been fulfilled (*YS* 4.34, *SK* 68). Whicher gives his own particular (and implausible) twist to this sense of the modifications of the *guṇas* coming to an end: “This ending, it must be emphasized, does not mark a definitive disappearance of the *guṇas* from *puruṣa*'s view”, he says. Rather, the *guṇas* continue to operate, producing experience in the form of *vṛttis*; and the sole difference between the yogin's new state and that which preceded *kaivalya* is that he now no longer *identifies* with those *vṛttis*: “Now the yogin's identity (as *puruṣa*), disassociated from ignorance, is untouched, unaffected by qualities of mind, uninfluenced by the *vṛttis* constituted of the three *guṇas*” (1998a: 277). In support of his view, Whicher cites Swāmī Hariharānanda Āraṇya's comment that in the state of cessation (*nirodha*) the *guṇas* “do not die out but their unbalanced activity due to non-equilibrium that was taking place ... only ceases on account of the cessation of the cause (*avidyā* or nescience) which brought about their contact” (Āraṇya 1963: 123, quoted in Whicher 1998a: 380 n.97; Whicher's ellipsis). Āraṇya's statement, however, is merely a reiteration of the familiar view that, by “cessation of the *guṇas*,” is meant not their complete annihilation but, rather, their abiding in a state of perfect equanimity. This equanim-

² Cf. *YS* 3.18: “From immediate apperception of *saṃskāras* [comes] knowledge of previous births.”

³ Cf. *Maitr. Up* 2.6: “By him [Prajāpati] thus driven, this body goes round and round like the wheel (driven) by the potter” (trans. Radhakrishnan 1978: 803; Radhakrishnan's parentheses, my square brackets).

ity of the *guṇas* is the unmanifest (*avyakta*) condition of *prakṛti*, and thus, contrary to Whicher's denial, precisely *does* "mark a definite disappearance of the *guṇas* from *puruṣa*'s view", and hence a definitive end to experience.

Whicher asks, rhetorically, how, if *kaivalya* is a disembodied and non-experiential state, there could "be anyone around to articulate that it even exists".⁴ The question is a pertinent one, but it has been dealt with by the Sāṃkhya and Yoga traditions. In the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* and its commentaries, for example, one who has attained the state wherein perfect discrimination (*viveka*) is enjoyed and yet the "wheel" (*cakra*) still spins is referred to as a *jīvanmukta*, one who is "liberated in life". It is in this state, prior to forsaking the cogitating mind and organic body for good, that the sage is able to furnish his students with illuminating teachings (SS 3.78–83). Such claims, of course, raise a dozen questions for every one they answer. How, for example, if the liberated sage is merely waiting for the wheel impelled by past actions to stop spinning can he initiate the new actions that instructing students would involve? But we cannot expect to address such questions here. The immediate issue is the exegetical one of how the Sāṃkhya and Yoga traditions account for the existence of teachings that are attributed to enlightened sages, and I think this has been covered.

We can, then, in my view leave aside the proposal that *kaivalya* amounts *merely* to a "purification", as opposed to a total cessation, of phenomenal existence. Now we can begin to investigate whether there might, in the absence of the realist assumption, be a more satisfactory way of interpreting the soteriological goal of Sāṃkhya and Yoga.

ALONENESS AND MISPERCEPTION

First, perhaps, we should address the question of whether *kaivalya* means the same in the *Yogasūtra* as it does in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*. I don't think much needs to be said about this, for there seems to me to be no valid reason for supposing that there is any significant difference between the two texts in this regard. In every instantiation of the term it can be read as denoting the state in which all mental activity (and hence all activity of any kind whatsoever) has ceased and *puruṣa* abides alone, in its "own nature" (*svarūpa*), which is consciousness (*cetana* (SK 55), *citiśakti* (YS 4.34)) or "mere seeing" (*dṛśimātra*, YS 2.20). Some important discrepancies and tensions do exist concerning the notion of *kaivalya*, and these will come to light in the course of the following discussion. They are, however, common to both Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and hence cannot be held up as exemplifying differences between the two systems.

⁴ Personal correspondence via e-mail, 25 April 2002. Cf. Whicher's published remark that, "If Patañjali's perception of the world of forms and differences had been destroyed or discarded, how could he have had such insight into Yoga and the intricacies and subtle nuances of the unenlightened state?" (1998a: 291).

Chapple is right to note that there is a difference of emphasis in the *Yogasūtra* as compared with the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* (Chapple 1996: 124). The latter text makes it appear that, once the appropriate level of self-knowledge has been attained, then it is just a matter of allowing the remaining saṃskāras to run their natural course in order for kaivalya to supervene upon their exhaustion (SK 67–68). The *Yogasūtra*, meanwhile, emphasises the need for sustained meditative discipline, and the active replacement of mental seeds of misidentification and compulsion by seeds of profound insight as a prelude to the state of “seedless” (*nirbīja*) samādhi (YS 1.50–51). This difference of emphasis flows naturally, however, from the overall difference of orientation between the two texts, the *Yogasūtra* being primarily concerned with practical instruction and the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* with metaphysical (or transcendental phenomenological) categorisation. It need not, therefore, be assumed to represent a divergence in either soteriological doctrine or practice.

My main purpose in this section is to highlight some key problems stemming from the important notions of misperception (*avidyā*, *viparyaya*) and liberation (*kaivalya*, *vimokṣa*) as they relate to puruṣa. As a way of approaching these problems, however, it will be useful to provide a brief overview of the various occurrences of the term *kaivalya* in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and *Yogasūtra* respectively.

The term appears four times in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, and five in the *Yogasūtra*. On two occasions in the former text the conjunct expression *kaivalyārtha* occurs, referring to the “sake (or ‘end’, *artha*) of aloneness (*kaivalya*)” (SK 17, 21), and this may reasonably be regarded as synonymous with *puruṣasyārtha* and *puruṣārtha* (the “sake of puruṣa”), which occur at kārikās 36 and 63 respectively, and with *vimokṣārtha* (the “sake of release”), at kārikās 56 and 58. Activity, or process, in general (*pravṛtti*) is said to be for the sake of kaivalya (SK 17), as is the very “communion” (*saṃyoga*) of puruṣa and prakṛti which initiates that activity (SK 21). The communion just referred to is also for the purpose of puruṣa’s “seeing” prakṛti (*darśanārtha*, SK 21), but it is fair to assume that this is a subordinate purpose to that of puruṣa’s final liberation, since prakṛti can be “seen” only insofar as she is active, and activity, as has just been noted, is for the sake of kaivalya. A similar dual purpose is mentioned in the *Yogasūtra*, where the “seen”, characterised by the three guṇas, serves the “purpose of experience (*bhoga*) and liberation (*apavarga*)” (YS 2.18). Here again, however, experience ought to be understood as auxiliary and not ultimate, for everything that is experienceable must eventually be recognised as dissatisfactory (*duḥkha*, YS 2.15, cf. SK 55).

At *Yogasūtra* 2.25 it is stated that the “aloneness of seeing” (*drśeḥ kaivalyam*) results from the “non-manifestation” or “non-existence” (*abhāva*) of saṃyoga, which “non-existence” in

turn results from the non-existence or cessation of avidyā, about which I shall say more shortly. Sūtra 3.50, meanwhile, declares that kaivalya is due to non-attachment to even the “vision of the otherness of sattva and puruṣa”, this vision having been referred to in the preceding sūtra. Thus kaivalya is not regarded as a state of discriminative knowledge; even the knowledge of puruṣa’s non-identity with sattva, which can here be taken to refer to the purified aspect of mind (*buddhi, citta*), must be relinquished. Sūtra 3.55 adds that kaivalya consists in the “sameness of purity of sattva and puruṣa”; which is a little incongruous, since one might have supposed (a) that nothing could attain to an equivalence of purity with a principle so utterly non-phenomenal as puruṣa, and (b) that, in the absence of saṃyoga, buddhi or citta would have completely demanifested along with all the other modes of manifest prakṛti, and that it would thus be unnecessary and inappropriate to speak of its “purity”. It could, however, be that it is precisely the unmanifest condition of buddhi that is meant by its “purity”; and that insofar as both principles can be described as unmanifest—all mental content having been discontinued—buddhi and puruṣa can be said to share the same (or at least an analogous) level of purity.

Looking to the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* again, *kaivalya* features among the principal characteristics of puruṣa, the others being (according to SK 19) “witnessing (*sākṣitva*), [...] equanimity (*mādhyaṣṭhya*), seer-ness (*draṣṭṛtva*, i.e. awareness), and inactivity (*akartṛbhāva*).” This inclusion of *kaivalya* suggests that “aloneness” is puruṣa’s inherent or natural state, and hence that the soteriological goal consists in a reclamation or realisation of that natural state rather than a change from one condition to another. The notion that it is prakṛti alone that undergoes activity and transformation, and that puruṣa—being essentially independent of spatiotemporal conditions—never enters into genuine involvement with her, is reinforced by certain other statements in the text. At kārikā 60 it is said that, while prakṛti, “endowed with qualities (*guṇavatī*), proceeds to serve his purpose in various ways without benefit to herself, *puruṣaḥ* (i.e. puruṣa), being without qualities, performs no active role.” And at kārikā 62 we find the following apparently unequivocal pronouncement:

Surely, then, no-one is bound, no-one released, nor indeed is anyone transmigrating (*saṃsarati*, literally “wandering”). Prakṛti in its several abodes (*āśrayā*, i.e. manifest forms) is transmigrating, bound, and released.⁵

The situation appears to be clear: puruṣa undergoes no change whatsoever, while prakṛti transmigrates from one lifetime to another in a state of bondage until she is finally released.

⁵ *tasman na badhyate 'ddhā na mucyate nāpi saṃsarati kaścit / saṃsarati badhyate mucyate ca nānāśrayā prakṛtiḥ //*

This, however, brings us to one of the crucial difficulties that I wish to draw attention to here. For if it is *prakṛti* that is released, then in what sense does she act “for the sake of *puruṣa*”?

In order for *prakṛti*’s activity to be both purposeful and “for another’s sake” (*SK* 17, 60), *puruṣa* must have a purpose to be fulfilled; and this in turn necessitates that *puruṣa* must undergo a transition from a state of unfulfilment to one of fulfilment—however that fulfilment is conceived. The *raison d’être* of the whole metaphysical schema is *puruṣa*’s liberation, and thus if it were really the case that *prakṛti*’s activity serves to bring about only her own release, the system would collapse. And yet, at the same time, we can see how tempting it is to deny that a supremely transcendent principle such as *puruṣa* has any purposes whatsoever.

The situation has therefore become far from clear; and since it would appear that the author of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* was himself wavering between two contradictory accounts of *puruṣa*’s status, it is doubtful that any interpretive effort will be able to resolve the contradiction. Eliade displays an awareness of the problem when he writes that

There is something of a paradox in the way in which Sāṃkhya and Yoga conceive the situation of Spirit (*puruṣa*); though pure, eternal, and intangible, Spirit nevertheless consents to be associated, if only in an illusory manner, with matter; and, in order to acquire knowledge of its own mode of being and “liberate” itself, it is even obliged to make use of an instrument created by *prakṛti* (in this case, intelligence). Doubtless, if we view things in this way, human existence appears to be dramatic[*] and even meaningless. If Spirit is free, why are men condemned to suffer in ignorance or to struggle for a freedom they already possess? If *puruṣa* is perfectly pure and static, why does it permit impurity, becoming, experience, pain, and history? (1969: 31–32.
*Presumably meaning “a mere performance”)

The problem expressed here is not, however, unique to Sāṃkhya and Yoga. Indeed, something very close to it tends to infect a large number of systems of metaphysics and soteriology, both in India and elsewhere. The essential problem is as follows. If one postulates an absolutely perfect, and thus unalterable, principle as the true identity of the sentient inhabitants of the manifest universe, then—whether that principle be called *brahman*, *puruṣa*, God, the One or anything else—the task of explaining how we, as ostensibly imperfect and patently alterable individuals, came to misidentify ourselves with our sullied minds and corruptible bodies becomes a logical impossibility. For, as soon as the notion of the perfect principle’s “forgetting” or “mistaking” itself is admitted, then the perfection of that principle has been radically and unrestorably compromised. If, by way of a defensive ploy, it is then suggested that no *ontological* imperfection has been admitted, merely an *epistemic* one, this cannot salvage the original position; for no concept of ontological perfection worthy of the name can contain within it the possibility of ignorance or self-delusion.

It is, no doubt, for reasons such as this that Siddhārtha Gautama, the reputed founder of Buddhism, maintained a majestic silence with regard to highly abstruse metaphysical questions, and urged his followers to pursue practical methods of alleviating their suffering in preference to getting hung up on abstract theory.⁶ Nondualist philosophies, on the other hand, have tended to double their difficulties by proposing that the perfect principle is not only the true identity of sentient beings, but is the source of all manifest phenomena as well. Proponents of nondualism are obliged to hold that the supreme principle, despite its inherent immutability, was somehow able to project out of itself a phenomenal veil, which it then mistook for its own true self. Due to the precarious and untenable nature of this assertion, it is usually not stated so explicitly, but is clouded and hedged by delegating responsibility for the manifestation of the world and the self-misunderstandings of sentient creation to a second principle, generally referred to in Advaita Vedānta for example as *māyā* (“creative illusion”) or *avidyā* (“false knowledge”, “misperception”).⁷ This second principle—at least when referred to as *māyā*—ends up playing a role very similar to that of the *prakṛti* of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, and thus seriously undermines the original claim of nondualism.⁸

In classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga the term *māyā*, though employed by certain commentators,⁹ does not appear in the primary texts. The notion of a fundamental and primordial error underlying the way we, as empirical subjects, experience ourselves and the world is, however, extremely prominent in both systems. And it is to this notion of erroneous perception that I now wish to direct the discussion.

In the *Yogasūtra* the “field” (*kṣetra*) from which all other mental afflictions (*kleśas*) grow is said to be *avidyā* (YS 2.4), and the five main afflictions together constitute the “root” (*mūla*) of all action (YS 2.12). *Avidyā* is defined as “seeing eternality, purity, delight, and essentiality in [that which is characterised by] temporality, impurity, distress, and inessentiality” (YS 2.5).¹⁰ It is thus claimed to be the source of the conjunction between the seer and the seen (YS 2.24), which conjunction becomes “unmanifest” or “non-existent” (*abhāva*) upon the cessation of *avidyā*; and this cessation is equated with the “aloneness of seeing” (*dr̥ṣeḥ kaivalyam*,

⁶The classic illustration of the Buddha’s anti-metaphysical approach occurs in the *Majjhimanikāya* 1.483–88 (the passage dealing with the “inexpressibles” (Pali: *avyākata*)). See e.g. Warren 1915: 123–28. For further references see Murti 1960: 36 fn.2.

⁷The application of the terms *māyā* and *avidyā* in the Advaita Vedānta tradition is far from consistent. In some instances the two terms appear to be used interchangeably, while in others *māyā* may be taken to denote empirical reality as perceived *under the influence of avidyā*. Even within the works commonly attributed to Śaṅkara there is a lack of consistency on this point (see Potter 1981: 79).

⁸Potter, paraphrasing the view of Sacchidanandendra Sarasvatī, notes that “*avidyā* in Śaṅkara is superimposition, whereas *māyā* is equivalent to *prakṛti* or *nāmarūpa*” (Potter 1981: 79).

⁹See e.g. GBh 22: “*prakṛti, pradhāna, brahman, avyakta, bahudhātmaka, and māyā* are synonyms (*paryāyas*).”

¹⁰*anityāśuciduḥkḥānātmasu nityāśucisukhātmakhyātir avidyā //*

YS 2.25). The term *avidyā* is not used in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, although its synonym *ajñāna* is implied as one of the four *tāmasa* modes of buddhi at *kārikā* 23.¹¹ At *kārikā* 47, however, the “five misapprehensions” (*pañca-viparyaya*) are referred to as being among the fifty components of the “phenomenal effusion” (*pratyaya-sarga*, SK 46); and although these five misapprehensions are not named in the *kārikā*, they are understood by certain commentators to be equivalent to the five *kleśas* of Yoga, and hence would include *avidyā* as the most important of the five (see esp. TK 47 and YV 1.8).¹²

Both the *Yogasūtra* and *Sāṃkhyakārikā* agree that the coming together or confusion of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is in some sense an act of misapprehension—a mistaking of one thing for another. “Due to that conjunction (*saṃyoga*)”, says *kārikā* 20, “the *liṅga*, though non-conscious (*acetana*), appears as though it were conscious; and although agency is of the *guṇas*, the detached one (*udāsīna*, i.e. *puruṣa*) appears as though active.” And since it is this very conjunction that initiates the “surge” of manifest *prakṛti*, it is clear that the emergence of the preconditions of experience—and hence the very arising of phenomenal reality itself—is predicated upon a primordial error, and that all experience is consequently rooted in and impregnated with misunderstanding. It is for this reason that Whicher’s contention that experience can continue in the absence of *saṃyoga* and *avidyā* must be a misinterpretation. *Samyoga* is the necessary precondition of experience, and *avidyā* is, in turn, the precondition of *saṃyoga*. Therefore, when *avidyā* is eradicated, the momentum which once gave rise to “birth, life, and experience” (YS 2.13) can no longer be generated, and hence when the still existent psychic impulses (*saṃskāras*) have been exhausted—that’s it. End of story.

Of course, if read in terms of a temporal narrative, then the fundamental role of *avidyā* would be absolutely nonsensical; for its being the cause of *saṃyoga* would necessitate that a misapprehension could *precede* the existence (or at least the *manifest* existence) of that which is misapprehended, namely the modes of manifest *prakṛti*. If, however, we again, as in Chapter 6 above, adopt a synchronic interpretive standpoint, then *avidyā* can be viewed not as a temporal and causal precedent, but as a logical precondition of experience. It cannot rightly be translated as “ignorance,” for this latter term implies something wholly negative.¹³ *Avidyā* has

¹¹ I say “implied” rather than “mentioned” because the *tāmasa* modes of buddhi are not named directly, but are referred to as the “opposite” of the *sāttvika* modes, these latter being “righteousness (*dharma*), knowledge (*jñāna*), non-attachment (*virāga*), and masterfulness (*aiśvarya*)”.

¹² Cf. Ghosh’s summary of Āraṇya’s *Sāṃkhyatattvāloka*, verse 34, in Āraṇya (1977: xii): “*Viparyaya* is the reproduction in consciousness of a thing as other than what it is. To assume that the mind, sense-organs and the body constitute the Self is the fundamental *viparyaya*.”

¹³ Cf. Matilal (1985: 321): “My main objection against both ‘nescience’ and ‘ignorance’ [as translations of *avidyā*] is that they express a predominantly negative meaning: ‘lack of knowledge’ or ‘absence of knowledge’.”

a positive aspect insofar as it facilitates the coming into being of the conditions of experience, and thus of the empirical world itself; but since, due to this very fact, experience is always a kind of delusion (“like *māyā*”, *YBh* 4.13), *avidyā* is to be overcome and replaced by its opposite (*vidyā*, *jñāna*, genuine knowledge), which is “the establishment of the power of awareness (*citiśakti*) in its own nature” (*YS* 4.34; cf. 1.3).

A synchronic approach does not, however, resolve the problem of what or whom *avidyā* is to be attributed to. If there are only two co-ultimate principles that logically precede manifest existence, namely *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, then *avidyā* must belong to one of these two. It cannot belong to *prakṛti*, since *prakṛti*, being nonconscious, cannot rightly be said to be in a state of knowledge or of non-knowledge. And thus we are forced again to accept that *puruṣa* can be afflicted by delusion.

Some interpreters have tried to blur the issue by referring to the owner of *avidyā* as “the yogin” or “the mind”, or by using ambiguous turns of phrase that leave the identity of the subject thoroughly obscure. When Whicher, for example, informs us that “In the ordinary consensus reality of empirical existence the sense of self misidentified with any aspect of *prakṛti* thinks that it is the seer” (1998a: 279; my underscoring), who, precisely, is doing the misidentifying? And how can a “sense of self” think anything at all, let alone “that it is the seer”? Similarly, when Feuerstein describes *avidyā* (which he translates as “nescience”) as “a fundamental category error which regards the Self as other than what it really is” (1979a: 63), the grammatical structure of the sentence implies that “the Self” (*puruṣa*) is regarded “as other than what it really is” by “a fundamental category error”. Such nonsense cannot, of course, be what Feuerstein intended, but in any case the original statement cleverly avoids the issue of *who* regards *puruṣa* in this way. Later in the same passage Feuerstein asserts that “we are all born in ignorance of our true nature and with the natural tendency of establishing our identity *outside* ourselves” (*ibid.*, original emphasis). And so the answer to my query would seem to be obvious: it is *we* who regard *puruṣa* “as other than what it really is”! But who are *we*? Surely, if our true self is *puruṣa*, then each of us *is* *puruṣa*. Indeed, it is utterly tautologous to say so. And thus it is *puruṣa* who mistakenly regards *itself* “as other than what it really is.” This is the only logical conclusion.

The question of who is afflicted by *avidyā* is equivalent to that of who is liberated, for liberation is liberation from dissatisfactoriness (*duḥkha*), and hence *from avidyā*—and hence, needless to say, from experience as such. If it is *puruṣa* that is liberated, then it must also be *puruṣa* that was under the influence of *avidyā*, or who succumbed to the kind of misidentification for which *avidyā* stands. This is obviously problematic, for if *puruṣa* is pure, transcendent-

tal consciousness, then it is hardly the sort of thing that can move from a condition of affliction to one of liberation. For reasons such as this, the one who attains kaivalya is, as in the case of the subject of avidyā, commonly referred to in ambiguous terms, as “the yogin” or “the wise one”, etc. When puruṣa is, at the same time, maintained to be eternally perfect, a paradox arises; for it is self-contradictory to claim that the yogin (who misidentifies himself with the empirical personality) is identical to puruṣa but that puruṣa never misidentifies itself. The ambiguous terminology, however, mischievously disguises this paradox, enabling the interpreter to regard the yogin and puruṣa as identical and as non-identical according to the particular explanatory requirements of the moment.¹⁴

But the incongruities do not end there. I mentioned in Chapter 4 that there are two serious difficulties associated with the concept of puruṣa. One of these is the apparent requirement that it be regarded as susceptible to misperception, which has just been discussed. The second is its notorious characterisation as *multiple*.

PURUṢA AND MULTIPLICITY

The doctrine of puruṣa’s multiplicity has been one of the major targets of opponents and critics of the Sāṃkhya system in both traditional debates and modern scholarship. The classical statement of the doctrine comes in *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 18, which reads as follows:

Due to various patterns of birth, death, and capacities, and to the disjunction of activities, puruṣa’s multiplicity (*bahutva*) is established; and also due to contrariety of the three guṇas.¹⁵

Essentially what we have here is the claim that, because sentient beings are born and die at different times, and because they exhibit different qualities and capacities and perform different activities while they are alive, they must each be regarded as a distinct self or consciousness. Although there is no such explicit statement of the doctrine in the *Yogasūtra*, it is certainly implied at sūtra 2.22, where the activities of prakṛti are said to have ceased in relation to one whose “end is fulfilled” (*kṛtārtha*) but not to have ceased entirely, due to their

¹⁴ Merely one among many examples of this tendency occurs in a passage from Ghosh (1977: 36), where “the wise among us” are said to seek “freedom from the excrescence of a limited personality” and “the Divinity in them, the *Puruṣa*, who as the ultimate revealer of all appearance is certainly beyond the appearances called pleasure and pain.” The identity of “the wise” becomes even more uncertain when Ghosh adds that, “since His [i.e. puruṣa’s] conjunction with *Prakṛti*, which results in transitory shows, is maintained by confusion between Him and the empirical ego, they cultivate clearness of insight (*samprajñāna*) that they may attain an effective knowledge of the difference between the two (*vivekakhyāti*).” I would add simply that, if “the wise among us” are not really “empirical ego[s]”, then they must be puruṣas, and hence their discovery of “the Divinity in them” is nothing other than puruṣa’s self-discovery (which fact remains unstated in Ghosh’s ambiguous account).

¹⁵ *jananamaraṇakaraṇānām pratiniyamād ayugapat pravṛtteś ca / puruṣabahutvaṃ siddhiṃ traiguṇyaviparyayāc caiva //*

“commonality” (*sādhāraṇatva*, i.e. their continuing in relation to others). Vyāsa’s commentary on this sūtra distinguishes between the “proficient” (*kuśala*) puruṣa, whose end has been fulfilled, and the “non-proficient” puruṣas, for whom the “seen” continues to act; and some such distinction seems to follow unavoidably from the sūtra itself.¹⁶

Traditional criticisms of the doctrine have focused largely upon its apparent contradiction of *śruti*, i.e. principally the Upaniṣadic utterances to the effect that all selves are ultimately one (see e.g. Śaṅkara’s *BSBh* II.1.2). An attempt to counter such criticisms was made in the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* on the grounds that scriptural references to the nonduality (*advaita*) of the puruṣa, or *ātman*, ought to be understood as indicating *qualitative* and not *numerical* identity (*SS* 1.154). However unconvincing it may seem, this is the only defence open to Sāṃkhya if it is to try to align its doctrine of many selves with the received and lauded teachings of the Upaniṣads. The latter scriptures nowhere give any suggestion of a distinction between qualitative and numerical identity, but this is perhaps to their own detriment; for unless the plurality of empirical subjects is to be denied (which denial could lead only to solipsism) the claim that the supreme being (*brahman*, *paramātman*) is identical to the “living” or “embodied” self (*ātman*, *jīvātman*) must involve such a distinction.

Among modern scholars who have attacked the “many puruṣas” doctrine, one of the least forgiving is Keith, who writes at one place that “These spirits if examined are clearly nothing but abstractions of the concept of subject, and are philosophical absurdities, since in the abstract there can be but one subject and one object, neither, of course, being anything without the other” (1949: 60).¹⁷ The point is a valid one: there is undoubtedly something absurd about the notion of a multiplicity of abstract subjects, existing independently of time and space, and unoccupied by any content whatsoever. Indeed, it is for reasons such as this that, in the western philosophical tradition, Leibniz’s conception of an infinity of dimensionless “monads” is generally regarded as little more than a historical curiosity. On the other hand, however, I suspect that Keith has been too quick to underestimate the profoundly problematic nature of the subject-matter being dealt with here. On the face of it he is right to highlight the fact that the “number and individuality” of conscious individuals “are conditioned by the possession of a

¹⁶ Feuerstein’s declaration that he is “inclined to read this *sūtra* in the spirit of the pre-classical tradition where *kṛta-artha* also denotes the person who has become the Self” (1980: 23) misses the point. Despite his choice of the expression “*become* the Self”—as opposed to, say, “*realised* one’s true nature *as* the Self”—I doubt whether Feuerstein would demur that the person concerned was in fact *already* the “Self”, and had simply not yet realised it. The situation is therefore equivalent to the “many puruṣas” view, for if the Self can be realised by one person without such an event initiating the immediate realisation of all other persons, *and yet those other persons are all equally “the Self”*, then that Self must be admitted to be *multiple*.

¹⁷ Cf. Deussen (1919: 245): “What philosophical mind can admit this thought? [i.e. the multiple puruṣas doctrine.] The knowing subject is in me (*ahaṃ brahma asmi*) and nowhere else, for everything beside me is object, and for this very reason not subject.”

different objective content in consciousness;" and that "if this were removed there would remain nothing at all, or at most the abstract conception of subject, which could not be a multitude of individual spirits" (ibid.: 88). But if we consider that the very notion of a multiplicity of sets of objective content itself presupposes a multiplicity of conscious domains in which those sets can manifest, then, I think, we begin to glimpse the kind of conceptual terrain into which the Sāṃkhya philosophers were venturing.

Larson tries to excuse, or explain away, the "many puruṣas" doctrine by asserting that "it is hardly likely that the Sāṃkhya teachers were thinking of the plurality of consciousnesses as a set of knowable entities to be counted. They were thinking, rather, of a plurality of intellects through which the disclosure of contentless consciousness occurs" (1987: 80). Larson is probably at least partially correct here, for it is certainly the case that the individuatedness of self or consciousness cannot be appreciated in isolation from the intentional or experiential mode of consciousness for which *buddhi* ("intellect" in Larson's translation) stands. What I think he underplays, however, is the phenomenologically-rooted nature of the doctrine, which I shall now say a little more about.

Phenomenologically-speaking, we, as conscious subjects, are constantly being pulled in two directions. The relationship between our inmost subjectivity and the empirical world is a kind of Wittgensteinian duck-rabbit:¹⁸ I can see myself as the "duck" of individuated being, inhabiting a world comprised of myriad entities, some of which appear to be conscious in ways that resemble myself; or as the "rabbit" of transcendental consciousness—what Wittgenstein himself, in his earlier work, refers to as "the philosophical self" or "metaphysical subject". This latter self is "not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather [...] the limit of the world—not a part of it" (1974: 70 [5.641]). But I cannot see—understand, know—myself to be the duck and the rabbit at the same time.

For a further perspective upon the same self-experiential conundrum, let us take note of the following passage from Edmund Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*:

I, the reduced "human Ego" ("psychophysical" Ego), am constituted [...] as a member of the "world" with a multiplicity of "objects outside me". But I myself constitute all this in my "psyche" and bear it intentionally within me. If perchance it could be shown that everything constituted as part of my peculiar ownness, including then the reduced "world", belonged to the concrete essence of the constituting subject as an inseparable internal determination, then, in the Ego's self-explication, his peculiarly own world would be found as "inside" and, on the other hand, when running through that world straightforwardly, the Ego would find himself as a member among its "externalities" and would distinguish between himself and "the external world". (1977: 99)

¹⁸ The duck-rabbit is a famous example of an image that can be viewed as two distinct things, but not simultaneously. Wittgenstein attributes it to Jastrow's *Fact and Fable in Psychology*, and includes it in his *Philosophical Investigations* (2001 [1953]: 165–66).

The two contradictory descriptions of puruṣa that are presented in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* correspond in certain important respects to the two aspects of egoity identified by Husserl. The individuated puruṣa of kārikā 18 is analogous to Husserl's "psychophysical Ego"—"constituted [...] as a member of the 'world' [...]"—while the pure self or consciousness of kārikā 19 ("witnessing [...], aloneness, equanimous, seer-ness, and inactive") is more like what Husserl in many other passages calls the "transcendental ego" (e.g. 1977: 23). Of course, puruṣa cannot in any respect be said to "constitute" the world of objects, but it can be regarded (albeit loosely and analogically) as the arena within which objects are constituted. It stands for the sheer possibility of anything's appearing as an object, whereas prakṛti is that which shows itself as the conditioning factors of experience. Consequently, puruṣa might be said to "bear [the 'world'] intentionally within [itself]", as Husserl says of his constituting ego.

What should not be lost sight of, however, is the fact that Sāṃkhya and Yoga seem to attach a far more literal sense, than does Husserl, to the notion of "purity" in relation to self and consciousness. For Husserl, "pure consciousness" ("transcendental consciousness", "transcendental subjectivity", etc.) is merely ordinary consciousness as viewed in terms of phenomena alone. It is still marked by the same objective content; the only difference between it and ordinary consciousness being that the "natural attitude" has been suspended, this natural attitude consisting in the assumption that objects of experience are exemplaries of a real world that lies outside consciousness (cf. Smith 2003: 25). It is "pure" merely in the sense that its contents are no longer tainted by any "prejudice" concerning their ontological status (cf. *ibid.*: 19). Similarly, the pure, or "transcendental", ego is not an *experienceless* ego, but is merely the ego as considered in terms of its *containing* its intentional objects rather than being itself just another entity within the (trans-egoic) world. For Sāṃkhya and Yoga, meanwhile, pure consciousness is not arrived at merely by means of an attitudinal shift. More than being just the context in which experience can occur, it is also that which remains when all phenomenal content is removed. It is, or can be, a state of being in which the transcendental self or consciousness is neither drawn out of itself into a world of mental and physical events, nor even constitutes the boundary around those events, but abides instead solely in its own nature, as consciousness (awareness, "seeing") alone. In this sense of "pure consciousness", it is not only ontological prejudices that have been stripped away, but experience itself. I shall discuss this point further in the next section.

To sum up the present section it can be noted that, contrary to certain interpreters, I do not hold that the multiple puruṣa doctrine can be explained away, or that it can easily be brought

into harmony with the doctrine of a pure, dimensionless and non-engaged self. Rather, I maintain that these two conceptions of self perpetually and awkwardly rub up against one another in Sāṃkhya and Yoga; and that this awkwardness, far from exposing some disastrous weakness in the two darśanas, in fact points up a genuine and inordinately intractable antagonism at the heart of what it is to be a conscious subject. Of course, we cannot be sure that the proponents of the classical systems were fully alert to this antagonism, for insofar as they make no direct reference to it, the impression is given that the descriptions of puruṣa at, for example, *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 18 and 19 are to be regarded as perfectly compatible. Whether these proponents were or were not aware of the full extent of the difficulty, however, I consider that anyone's ridiculing and disparaging the conception of puruṣa advanced in Sāṃkhya and Yoga without thoroughly thinking through the issues involved amounts to doing these systems a great disservice.

CONSCIOUSNESS WITHOUT CONTENT

The concept of "pure consciousness" is, as was noted briefly in Chapter 4, highly controversial within western philosophy. The so-called "continental" stream of modern European philosophy has been strongly influenced by the phenomenological philosophy of Husserl and his predecessors such as Franz Brentano, who tended to define consciousness in terms of intentionality.¹⁹ Indeed, members of the phenomenological movement commonly, following Husserl himself, read the doctrine of the essential intentionality of consciousness back into the history of philosophy. As James Edie, for example, puts it: "most historical philosophers have acknowledged the intentionality of consciousness in the sense that all consciousness is *consciousness of something*, that consciousness is a self-transcending process oriented toward objects *other than* and *outside* itself" (1987: 7; original emphasis). Defining consciousness as necessarily intentional, i.e. object-oriented, inevitably rules out the possibility of pure consciousness in the way that this expression—or its Sanskrit equivalents (such as *dṛśimātra*, *YS* 2.20)—is used within Sāṃkhya and Yoga and comparable soteriological traditions.

In the Anglo-American analytic stream of philosophy, meanwhile, the philosophy of mind has tended to be dominated by physicalist and functionalist approaches. Physicalism identifies mental states with brain states, or gives to mental states, at most, the status of being "supervenient" upon neurophysiological states (see e.g. Kim 1984), while functionalism holds

¹⁹ "Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (and also mental) inexistence[*] [...] of an object [...] and what we would call, although in not entirely unambiguous terms, the reference to a content, a direction upon an object" (Brentano 1960: 50). *NB: For Brentano, "inexistence" means "existence *in* [something]", *not* "non-existence".

mental states to be “constituted by their causal relations to one another and to sensory inputs and behavioural outputs” (Block 1995: 189). Neither approach, therefore, has anything of interest to say about the phenomenological dimension of mental states; and, consequently (and even more importantly for our present study), since neither of them is interested in phenomena, they are both incapable of so much as formulating the possibility of a state of consciousness that, though devoid of phenomenal content, is yet not equivalent to unconsciousness. While, on physicalist and functionalist assumptions, the existence of consciousness of any kind independently of the complex neurophysiological processes of the organic body is unthinkable, this is not a view shared by the Indian systems with which we are concerned. Sāṃkhya and Yoga declare, not only that the state of pure consciousness that they seek is one in which the factors that bring physical objects (including the human body) into formal existence have receded into an unmanifest condition, but that the final goal of human life (and of manifest existence in general) involves both a decisive split with the “body” (*śarīra*) and the spatiotemporal detachment (but certainly not annihilation) of consciousness itself.

Within the area of research that deals with mysticism and mystical experiences the issue of pure consciousness has been a significant bone of contention for many years, and especially since the late 1970s.²⁰ On one side of the debate are the proponents of what has become characterised broadly as “constructivism” or “contextualism”, according to which both the post hoc reports of mystical experiences and, crucially, the *experiences themselves* are “constructed” (“defined”, “conditioned”, “mediated”, etc.) by the culturally-derived concepts, beliefs, and expectations of the experiencing mystic.²¹ On the other side of the debate are those who propose an “anti-constructivist” or “decontextualist” view, which has been labelled more positively by Robert Forman as “perennial psychology” (and is not, according to him, to be identified with the “perennial philosophy” of an earlier generation of thinkers (Forman 1998: 3 ff.)).

Forman and others argue that, although the constructive factors cited by constructivists do indeed play an important role in ordinary (non-mystical) experience, there is a particular category of human experience that transcends such factors because it supervenes upon the “forgetting” or “letting go” of cognitive operations. “[T]he key process in mysticism is not like a construction process”, writes Forman, “but more like one of unconstructing. Meditative procedures encourage one to gradually lay aside and temporarily cease employing language

²⁰ i.e. since the publication of *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, edited by Steven Katz (1978).

²¹ See e.g. Steven Katz (1978: 33): “these images, beliefs, symbols, and rituals define, *in advance*, what the experience [the mystic] *wants to have*, and which he then does have, will be like” (original emphasis). “The notion of unmediated experience seems, if not self-contradictory, at best empty” (ibid.: 26).

and concepts” (1998: 7). Such procedures can, Forman claims, lead eventually to a conscious state that is so contrary to ordinary modes of experience that the very term “experience” barely seems applicable. This latter issue led Forman to coin the expression “pure consciousness event”, which he defines as “a wakeful though contentless (nonintentional) consciousness” (1990: 8).

Both sides in the debate over mystical experience have had specific things to say about Sāṃkhya and Yoga. Forman uses the notion of *kaivalya* in these systems as an illustrative example of what he means by “pure consciousness event”. What is encountered as a result of the process of “relinquishing mental activities” that these systems advocate is, says Forman, “not something acquired from outside, learned, or even thought, for these would all be elements [...] within *prakṛti*. Rather, what is encountered in *kaivalya* is *puruṣa*, which is inherent *within the self itself*” (1998: 11). The use of terms such as “encounter” as substitutes for “experience” do not, of course, eradicate the problem of an implied intentionality. An “encounter” requires duality just as much as an “experience” does; and hence Forman’s description of *kaivalya* as an encounter with *puruṣa* is highly problematic, since who would it be who does the encountering, if not *puruṣa* itself?

Later in the same essay Forman struggles to find an appropriate vocabulary with which to refer to the kind of knowledge that is arrived at in the state of pure consciousness. Having briefly outlined “knowledge-by-acquaintance” (i.e. the sort of knowledge that I claim to have when I declare, for example, that “I *know* Mrs Smith”) and “knowledge-about” (as in “I know *that* Delhi is the capital of India”, etc.), Forman notes that neither of these epistemic modes can meet the task at hand.²² He then suggests, instead, “knowledge-by-identity” as a more suitable expression to delineate the state of knowing oneself to *be* consciousness, although he nevertheless repeatedly slips into talking of it as though it were the knowledge *that* I am aware.²³ There is, of course, a major difference between knowing “*that* I am and have been aware” and knowing oneself *as awareness* (or *as consciousness*). The former kind of knowledge is perfectly compatible with our everyday pre-mystical understanding of ourselves as individuated psychophysical entities—and, moreover, necessarily implies the presence of some knowledge-content—whereas the latter involves at least a radical shift of self-identity

²² Forman probably derives the distinction from William James’s treatment of it (1950 [1890]: 221 f.), although James himself disclaims any originality on his own part, noting that “Most languages express the distinction” (p. 221). Bertrand Russell promoted the notion of this distinction in his essay “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description” (1917).

²³ “The knowledge that I am aware [...] is not a matter of language, nor does it stand on the back of prior experiences. I *just know* directly and without complex reasoning that I am and have been aware. And I know it simply by virtue of being aware” (1998: 22; Forman’s italics, my underscoring).

and, arguably, a complete abandonment of anything whatsoever that could be called an “understanding” or “knowledge” of oneself or of anything else.

In contrast with Forman, Steven Katz refuses to admit the possibility of consciousness without content, and thus asserts that “it is in appearance only that such activities as yoga produce the desired state of ‘pure’ consciousness” (1978: 57). “Properly understood,” he continues, yoga

is *not* an *unconditioning* or *deconditioning* of consciousness, but rather it is a *reconditioning* of consciousness, i.e. a substituting of one form of conditioned and/or contextual consciousness for another, albeit a new, unusual, and perhaps altogether more interesting form of conditioned–contextual consciousness. (Ibid.)

In support of this assertion Katz notes that the various traditions of yoga each have particular conceptions of their soteriological goal, and that since these conceptions differ from one another the experiences determined by them (for on Katz’s view the concepts *must* determine the experience²⁴) must also be different. Katz’s assumption here seems to be twofold. Firstly, in line with his overall epistemology, he is assuming that the results of yoga practice are in all cases determined by the conceptual formulation of the goal. Secondly he is assuming that he, or any other suitably qualified researcher, can adequately comprehend the goal of a yoga school or tradition from textual descriptions alone. This twofold assumption furnishes Katz with the confidence to state, for example, that “in Upanishadic Hinduism yoga is practised in order to purify the individual ‘soul’ and then to unite it with Brahman or, as later represented in the Bhagavad Gita, with Krishna” (ibid.) as though it were obvious what such terms as “soul” (which Katz is using here as a translation of *ātman*), *brahman*, and *kṛṣṇa* denote. For if the meaning of such terms is not immediately perspicuous then what justification can there be for declaring (a) that these terms refer to intentional objects and (b) that the intentional objects themselves are at variance to those referred to by different terms (or even by the same terms) in other traditions?

The fact is, however, that the meanings of the metaphysical terms concerned is a matter of dispute, both within and between the Indian traditions and among researchers from outside those traditions, and there is therefore no basis upon which to assert the nature and idiosyncrasy of a conceptualised goal simply by referring to a set of key terms that appear in textual

²⁴ At one place Katz suggests that the relation between “experience” and “beliefs” is reflexive—i.e. that “beliefs shape experience, just as experience shapes belief” (1978: 30)—but elsewhere he tends to exclusively prioritise the causal role of beliefs (concepts, expectations, etc.). See e.g. p. 46 of the same article: “mystical experience is ‘over-determined’ by its socio-religious milieu: as a result of his process of intellectual acculturation in its broadest sense, the mystic brings to his experience a world of concepts, images, symbols, and values which shape as well as colour the experience he eventually and actually has.”

descriptions, which descriptions are themselves often highly poeticised and/or dense and aphoristic. I agree with Katz that, in order to understand—or get anywhere close to understanding—the mystical proclamations of religio-philosophical schools we have to take account of the background philosophies of each school concerned. I disagree, however, that it is legitimate to assume from the outset that the background philosophy of any particular school wholly determines the nature and content—rather than merely the pre- and post-experiential interpretations—of its soteriological outcomes. It might well be the case that in many instances the soteriological outcome *is* “mediated”, “shaped”, etc. by theoretical factors, but Katz nowhere argues for this being so in all instances—he merely assumes it.²⁵

For the purposes of the present study, the question of whether the combined theoretical and practical technologies of Sāṃkhya and Yoga *really* result in a state of pure consciousness is in fact secondary. Indeed, it is a question that can be adequately addressed only by means of first-hand experimentation with the proposed techniques, and by diligent psychological (and possibly psychophysiological) evaluation of such experiments.²⁶ The primary issue here is the hermeneutic one of whether the soteriological goal of Sāṃkhya and Yoga *as formulated in the classical texts* can be best (most accurately) defined as a state of pure consciousness—or as something else. Katz’s position on this issue is not to deny that pure consciousness is the state *aspired to* by those who follow the procedures of Yoga, but, rather, to rule out on epistemological grounds the possibility of such aspirations being met (see 1978: 57, already quoted). His position is therefore highly inconsistent. On the one hand he advises researchers to treat the theoretical components of mystical traditions as evidence of the uniqueness and culture-specific nature of the experiences they engender, while on the other hand—when coming across theoretical accounts that speak of a contentless or pure state of consciousness, which is nevertheless not *unconsciousness*—he declares that such accounts are inadmissible as evidence of the results actually achieved because, since they conflict with his own “contextual thesis”, they must be epistemologically defective.²⁷

²⁵ When, for example, Katz says that “in order to understand mysticism it is *not* just a question of studying the reports of the mystic after the experiential event but of acknowledging that the experience itself as well as the form in which it is reported is shaped by concepts” (1978: 26), the acknowledgment concerned has no philosophical basis beyond Katz’s repeated assertion of epistemological constructivism; and an assertion, no matter how many times or with what degree of dogmatic fervour it is repeated, does not amount to an argument.

²⁶ A vast quantity of research data already exists on this topic. A useful summary and assessment of which are provided by Shear and Jevning 1999.

²⁷ It might be noted here that Katz’s own aptitude for correctly interpreting the claims of Sāṃkhya and Yoga is shown to be extremely dubious by his statement that the former of these two systems “understands the goal to be the perfection of the soul which does not lead to any form of *unio mystica* but rather to a splendid self-identity which, like God’s perfection, is self-contained and isolated” (1978: 57–58; my underlining). An endnote to this statement invites the reader to “see R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism* (New York, 1962;

The fact, then, that Katz regards proponents of Yoga as having profoundly misunderstood their own experiences need not imply the hermeneutic invalidity of describing the goal of Sāṃkhya and Yoga (as conceived from within the systems themselves) as a state of pure consciousness. The argument between Katz and Forman concerns the possibility of *attaining* pure consciousness; and this, though an extremely interesting issue in itself, is, as I have said, not what concerns us here.

There is, however, no getting away from the fact that the notion of pure consciousness is highly abstruse and problematic. Indeed, “consciousness” of any kind has tended to elude any fully satisfactory definition, and many philosophers have balked at the attempt. As John Dewey once noted,

Consciousness can neither be defined nor described. We can define or describe anything only by the employment of consciousness. It is presupposed, accordingly, in all definitions and all attempts to define it must move in a circle. (1886: 2)

Since consciousness is not a *thing*—or, at least, if it is a thing, then it is a thing most unlike any other—it is impossible to have a clear conception of it independently of its phenomenal content. When one tries to think of consciousness in itself, it recedes inexorably away from one’s cognitive grasp. Like a dog trying to catch its own tail, we cannot quite get hold of it no matter how quickly we run. Or, to use another metaphor, commonly found in Buddhist writings: just as the blade of a sword cannot cut itself, so it is impossible for consciousness to observe itself (cf. e.g. Wallace 1998: 67). Devoid of content, it would seem to possess no feature which could distinguish it from nothingness; and yet, since consciousness itself—or, if one refuses to call it such, then whatever it is that makes phenomenal consciousness possible—is presupposed in all experience, all knowledge, all conception, it is evidently not absolutely nothing. Jean-Paul Sartre, though hardly a mystic himself, refers to consciousness, when “purified of the *I*” (and hence of all contents whatsoever), as “quite simply a first condition and an absolute source of existence” (1957: 106). And since it is this that we are talking about—the first condition of conscious (or manifest, or phenomenal) existence—then, if we are to call it something, “pure consciousness” surely serves the purpose at least as well as any other term.

Schopenhauer, who certainly *did* have a mystical streak in him, talks of the “abolition of the will” as an event in which “the world melt[s] away”, leaving “before us only empty nothingness” (1966 1: 411–12). But he is careful to note that it is “for all who are still full of the

Oxford, 1966), pp. 94 ff.”, which would seem to suggest that Katz is not in fact familiar with the primary Sāṃkhya material. (The reference to Zaehner would also account for Katz’s rendering of *puruṣa* as “soul”).

will” that it is nothing, and that “conversely, to those in whom the will has turned and denied itself, this very real world of ours with all its suns and galaxies, is—nothing” (ibid.: 412). This point is very apt, for Schopenhauer’s notion of the abolition or denial of the will is, as far as it is possible to tell in these matters, highly reminiscent of the relinquishing of activities, desires and habits that precipitates the transition from egoic or personal consciousness to supra-personal “pure” or “absolute” consciousness in Sāṃkhya and Yoga. And just as in Schopenhauer’s account, the transition consists in a shift so radical and decisive that it marks, not a mere alteration of perspective within phenomenal existence, but a complete perspectival reversal; or, one could say, a transcendence of perspectivity itself.

Owing to the absolute otherness of the reality that is arrived at, certain exponents of mystical soteriologies have opted to hold back from committing themselves to any metaphysical position concerning its ultimate nature. The Buddha’s original emphasis upon bringing an end to distress and dissatisfaction (Pali: *dukkha*), as distinct from offering positive descriptions of the transcendent state, is the prime example in this respect.²⁸ In the case of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, however, I do not see how it can be denied that they conceive the final state to be one of pure consciousness.²⁹ *Puruṣa*, or *draṣṭṛ*, is almost invariably referred to in ways that implicitly or explicitly identify it as consciousness, and its “aloneness” is thus the ground, or essence, of consciousness—or consciousness “in itself”—vacated by all phenomenal content.³⁰ This, in my view, is the most plausible reading of, for example, *Yogasūtra* 1.2–3, where the “cessation of mental activities” is said to enable “the seer (*draṣṭṛ*) [to] abide in its own nature”; and of *sūtra* 4.34, where *kaivalya* is defined as the “returning-to-the-source of the qualities (*guṇas*), devoid of [any further] purpose for *puruṣa*; or the establishment of the own-nature of consciousness-power (*citiśakti*).” The same point is echoed in *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 68, according to which the “inactivity of *pradhāna*, due to the fulfilment of its purpose, [facilitates] the attainment of aloneness, which is both singular and conclusive.” The end towards which all experience is directed has been achieved, and its conditioning factors have dissolved into their unmanifest ground. All that remains is *puruṣa*, that which stood behind experience as its witness and was shrouded thereby, and which now stands naked and totally alone.

²⁸ See e.g. the famous First Sermon, where the third ennobling truth concerns the “cessation of *dukkha*” rather than the attainment of something positive (*Saṃyuttanikāya* 5.420, in e.g. Thomas 1927: 87–88).

²⁹ I am far from alone in taking this view, as the following remarks illustrate: “all we can assert of it [i.e. the liberated self] is that it is contentless consciousness, not consciousness of itself or of object” (K. C. Bhattacharyya 1956 I: 196); “The ultimate mystical experience in Sāṃkhya–Yoga results from the final elimination of all concepts, all thinking, all words, all feeling, all memory, and all perception. What is left, properly termed *innate*, is consciousness. It is not self-conscious and not symbolically conscious—just consciousness itself” (Pflueger 1998: 69–70).

³⁰ I say “almost invariably” because *SK* 18 (discussed in the previous section above) constitutes an important exception.

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Conclusion

na vijānāmi yad ivedam asmi (I know not that which truly I am)

(*Rgveda-saṃhitā* 1.164.37)¹

THE SOTERIOLOGICAL PROJECT of Sāṃkhya and Yoga—of escaping all forms of dissatisfaction, aggravation and distress, both physical and psychological—is a radical and ambitious one. In common with most other Indian soteriologies, these systems regard the source of dissatisfaction as a kind of self-misunderstanding, which consists in falsely identifying with aspects of reality that are susceptible to change, decay and death. Consequently, the path to release involves a systematic disidentification with those impermanent and inherently mutable aspects. On this point the various schools and sub-schools of Vedānta, Buddhism, and Jainism, as well as the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika darśanas—and, of course, Sāṃkhya and Yoga—can agree. And parallel, or closely analogous, lines of thinking can be discerned in many non-Indian traditions, such as Daoism, Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, Sufism, and the Kabbalah. The cleavages between these systems and traditions appear when one begins to consider, firstly, who or what it is that can be counted as one’s true being, and secondly, the nature of the relation between that being and the world in general. Each of the schools of thought just mentioned, both Indian and non-Indian, has as its stated aim the “realisation” of the answer to these issues through an intrapsychic revelation; and this is to be engendered by means of sustained and often extremely arduous self-discipline, involving adherence to strict ethical codes and, in most cases, the diligent practice of intense concentrative meditation techniques. In the study of systems such as Sāṃkhya and Yoga, this practical context should never be lost sight of, for it is out of the soil of this spiritually-oriented quest that the philosophy grows. Once the soteriological thrust is forgotten, then the philosophy collapses into ungrounded and dogmatic assertions, which appear whimsical and arbitrary.

But a soteriological practice cannot exist, of course, without an accompanying model, a conceptual framework within which the practice can be formulated and directed. It is probably out of the need for such models that many of the earliest known traditions of philosophy throughout the world emerged. For Sāṃkhya and Yoga this is almost certainly the case; and

¹ My translation. Sanskrit text obtained from <<http://www.srivaishnava.org/scripts/veda/rv/rvbook1.htm>> [accessed 22 February 2004].

hence what we have before us when we read the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and *Yogasūtra* are not self-contained philosophical treatises, but are, rather, collections of heuristic statements, gathered together for the purpose of guiding initiated seekers along the path that is intended to lead to their own “realisation” or “revelation” of an ultimately inexpressible truth (or “state of being”, if one prefers ontological to epistemological metaphors).

In this study I have been keen to ground my interpretations in the primary texts themselves whilst at the same time endeavouring to penetrate *through* the textual surface to the underlying significance, which is always a soteriological significance. If one remains at the level of the merely literal meaning, and does not take the subcutaneous purpose and context into account, then one ends up—as, in my view, has all-too-frequently happened in Sāṃkhya and Yoga scholarship—with a pile of incoherent speculations which hardly deserve the appellation of philosophy.

When, however, the context is taken seriously *at every stage*, then something far more interesting—indeed, deeply fascinating—emerges. When considered in the light of introspective meditation, the metaphysical schema presented in classical Sāṃkhya ceases to be a mere string of spuriously connected cosmological curiosities, and starts to look far more like a sophisticated and integrated analysis of the principal factors that give rise to experience. Owing to the laconic nature of the classical descriptions, it is impossible to be certain precisely how each of the factors was conceived, but, roughly speaking, the schema can be taken to comprise (as was noted in Chapter 6) the following items: discerning perceptual awareness or intentionality (*buddhi*); egoity (*ahaṃkāra*); synthesis of sensations and volitional direction of bodily actions (*manas*); the five modes of sensory perception (*buddhīndriyas*); five kinds of externally-oriented action (*karmendriyas*); five types of sensory content (*tanmātras*); and five forms of sensible objects (*bhūtas*). None of these are, themselves, external to what would in western philosophical parlance be called the experiencing subject; and hence, contrary to the received view of modern Sāṃkhya exegesis, the schema contains no implication of realism, and especially not of the kind of crude physical realism that is so often attributed to it.

I have sought, for the purpose of clarifying certain points and distinctions (as many modern interpreters, both western and Indian, do), to draw comparisons between aspects of Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophy on the one hand, and the ideas of western philosophers on the other. Particularly useful has been the notion of a transcendental analysis of experience, that was developed by Kant in his later writings, and which has proved to be extremely influential within western philosophy ever since. While arguing that the realist interpretation of Sāṃkhya and Yoga is thoroughly misguided, I have, however, been careful not to claim that these In-

interpretation of that idealism could be agreed upon!). This is principally because I agree with Edward Conze that, since Kant was engaged in a very different style of philosophy, and with very different intentions, to those of any “pre-Macaulayan” Indian thinker, it is simply inapposite to assume that the answers arrived at bear any significant correlation to one another (1967: 231–32, quoted in Larson 1987: 641 n.83). Sāṃkhya and Yoga show no sign of being interested in the question of what ontological status the objects of our outer experience ought to be accorded; and hence to refer to their position as either antirealist or positively idealist would be to impose an inappropriate emphasis upon that position.

Despite the assumptions of numerous commentators, beginning with Vyāsa, that the *Yogasūtra* contains an attempt to refute idealism, my own examination of the relevant sūtras (in Chapter 4), and of classical Yoga and Sāṃkhya as a whole, has not convinced me that this is the case. Indeed, I have found nothing to suggest that these systems are incompatible with idealism, and my view that the principles of manifest prakṛti can best be understood as conditioning factors of experience implies that the objectual contents of experience are ideally constructed and not mind-independent entities. The doctrine that puruṣa’s presence is necessary for the manifestation of the conditioning factors themselves is a more explicit affirmation of idealism, which fact has been recognised by some scholars.² But it is idealism of a peculiar sort, and therefore I have taken the view that it would be misleading to call it idealism at all. It is true that puruṣa is held to be necessary for the manifestation of prakṛti, but the manifestation of prakṛti is not uncomplicatedly the manifestation of the empirical world. It is, as I have noted above, the emergence of the conditions of experience. There is, admittedly, a sense in which these conditions simply *are* experience, for together they constitute experience. But they constitute experience *in general*, not any particular experiences, and hence it remains the case that no perspicuous statement is made regarding the relation between the complex of conditioning principles and the world of particularised objects.

In the work of phenomenologists such as Edmund Husserl (who has been referred to in the last chapter), the question of the ontological status of the objects of experience is “bracketed” or “put out of play” as part of the process of phenomenological “reduction” or *epoché*. This “bracketing” enables the components of experience to be treated as merely phenomenological items without any presumption being made about their having, or not having, an existence in-

²See e.g. Balbir Singh (1976: 140): “Sāṃkhya [...] believes the mere presence of *puruṣa* (*samnidhyamātra*) to be enough for *prakṛti* to start its evolutionary process. This [...] shows that all Indian systems are directly or indirectly committed to idealism, despite the appearance, in some cases, to the contrary. In very unequivocal terms it means that the world exists because the spirit exists, and depends on it for both its evolution and its dissolution.”

dependently of the experiential episode they constitute.³ In the case of Sāṃkhya and Yoga there is also a kind of “bracketing” of the ontological question going on, but it does not appear to be so much a chosen philosophical strategy as a mere disregarding of the issue.

Whether intended or not, however, the ignoring of the relation between the manifest principles (or analysed constituents of experience-in-general) on the one hand, and the actual objects of experience on the other, allows Sāṃkhya and Yoga to concentrate upon the relation that is of primary importance to them. This is the relation between the manifest principles and something even more fundamental to our true nature; indeed, something *ultimately* fundamental, which, due to its lying behind all conceptual and perceptual understanding, evades clear conceptualisation itself. As we have seen, it is generally called *puruṣa* (“person,” “self,” “man”) in Sāṃkhya, and often *draṣṭṛ* (“seer”) in Yoga; but such terms should not, I think, be taken too rigidly. They strike me as being more like approximations of, or gestures towards, the intended target rather than definite encapsulations of it. As I have argued in the last chapter, what I consider it to be that is being gestured towards is that which is left of consciousness when all phenomena are removed. The claim that something *does* remain in such a situation is, of course, a metaphysical one; but it is a claim about a metaphysical item that is so utterly discontinuous with anything else one can think of, that no sooner has one begun to talk about it than one’s words start to jar and rebel against the sense that is being imputed to them. Literal, prosaic, speech is simply not up to the task; and neither, in the last analysis, is poetry. Yet poetic allegories and metaphors are the best tools that language can provide;⁴ and thus it is not surprising that we find these in abundance in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, especially in its latter verses, where *puruṣa* is likened to a spectator who sees, yet remains unaffected by, the performance of *prakṛti* (*SK* 61, 66). *Puruṣa* or *draṣṭṛ* “in itself” I have likened to “pure consciousness”; which is a troublesome concept, but again, probably among the best that language can come up with in the present circumstances.

A central question, broached in Chapter 7 but about which more could be said here, is: What exactly do the proponents of Sāṃkhya and Yoga mean when they say, as they do frequently, that *prakṛti* acts “for the sake of *puruṣa*” or “for the sake of (*puruṣa*’s) liberation”? The meaning of such statements is rarely, if ever, queried in the interpretive literature, and hence it would seem to have been taken for granted that the meaning is obvious. But if taken literally the statements concerned contain a huge and in no way obviously justified assump-

³ A very readable account of the phenomenological method of “reduction” is provided by A. D. Smith (2003: 18 ff.); cf. e.g. Husserl 1931, sect. 32.

⁴ Cf. Schopenhauer (1974b i: 212): “in general it is not granted to us to comprehend the deepest and most hidden truths other than in figures and similes.”

tion, which is that experience per se is goal-oriented; i.e. it all happens for a reason, with a specific end in view.

I have discussed in the last chapter the key problem associated with the goal itself, namely that either (a) *puruṣa* is eternally disengaged from phenomenal reality, and thus has no need of “liberation”, or (b) *puruṣa becomes* engaged through misidentifying itself with the conditions of that reality, and thus must be the sort of thing that can make perceptual errors (and hence is not quite the “pure consciousness” that we thought it was). But from neither of these interpretive options does it immediately follow that the totality of experience—or, more precisely, the activity that gives rise to the totality of experience—should be for the purpose of *puruṣa*’s liberation; and in the case of option [a] in particular, since *puruṣa* is already “liberated”, such a claim would be meaningless.

I do not wish to pretend that these kinds of difficulties can be easily ironed out, or swept under the carpet. I suspect that they might not be solvable, but this would be no great surprise. Indeed, it would be far more surprising if Sāṃkhya and Yoga were found to contain no philosophical imperfections whatsoever. All I have tried to do in this study is to present the *most* plausible and coherent exposition of the textual sources that I can muster, and I do not claim to have tidied up every loose end. But, to return to the matter of what is meant by activity’s being for *puruṣa*’s sake: it is, of course, the case that, within the overall framework of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems, liberation could not be realised without experience; for it is only by disidentifying with experience, and with the conditions thereof, that *puruṣa* can escape being pulled into the world of suffering. There is thus a sense in which activity as such is indispensable to the pre-liberated *puruṣa*, and to that extent can be said to be for *puruṣa*’s sake. This interpretation has the advantage of not implying—as some interpretations might⁵—that *prakṛti* has it all planned out, so to speak, i.e. that every experiential episode is merely a part of an unfolding process that leads inexorably to a predetermined outcome. Yet again, however, the notion of a “pre-liberated” *puruṣa* causes serious problems here, conflicting as it does with the notion of *puruṣa*’s being eternal in the atemporal sense—i.e. completely independent of time, and thus capable of having neither a *pre-* nor a *post-*liberated state.

A further interpretive possibility that in my view is worth pondering, is that expressions such as “for the sake of *puruṣa*” might be intended merely, or primarily, to emphasise the phenomenological point that—since nothing can manifest independently of consciousness—events, objects, experiences, thoughts, etc. are thus in every instance *for us*, or, to be

⁵ In particular I’m thinking here of the tendency, prevalent within the Theosophical Society and similar groups, to enlist (albeit selectively) Sāṃkhya concepts in order to bolster their own “grand plan” cosmological theories (see e.g. Blavatsky 1888 i: 247, 256).

more exact, *for me*, not as a psychophysical complex but as unalloyed consciousness itself. In this sense prakṛti is always the servant of puruṣa, and owes “her” entire manifest existence to “him” (the symbolic framework of Sāṃkhya and Yoga scrapes uncomfortably against modern sexual–political sensibilities—but it is far from being unique among spiritual traditions in this respect). Indeed, one of the alternative terms for prakṛti is *sva*, meaning “one’s own” or “oneself” (cf. Latin *sui*), just as one of the synonyms of *puruṣa* is *svāmin*, the “self-possessor” or “owner” (YS 2.23). The empirical world and its conditioning factors belong to puruṣa. Whether puruṣa *needs* them is a *quæstio vexata* to which there seems to be no consistent response.

The fundamental dualism at the heart of Sāṃkhya and Yoga is often taken to be the greatest weakness and inadequacy of these systems. Indeed, it has been held up as an illustration of their failure to achieve a fully “philosophical” understanding of reality.⁶ I, on the other hand, see dualism as their greatest strength, and as an indication of the triumph of their philosophical predilections over the solely mystical drive towards spiritual monism and the religious demand for a divine governing power. The authors of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and *Yogasūtra* appear not to be very concerned whether their teachings are, or are not, perfectly consonant with those of the so-called “heard” or “received” wisdom (*śruti*), contained in the Vedic canon and more particularly in a select number of Upaniṣads. The Vedānta darśana, with its myriad branches and sub-branches, has expended countless words and man-hours in the attempt to read into the Upaniṣads a consistent set of doctrines. However, the Upaniṣads, being works largely of mystical poetry rather than systematic philosophy, strenuously resist such attempts at systematisation and make them appear utterly ridiculous.⁷

Ironically, some interpreters have imputed a superior status to Yoga over Sāṃkhya on the grounds that, whereas the latter system is “merely” rational in its approach, Yoga is founded upon immediate intuitions of an underlying metaphysical reality. As I have made clear in Chapter 2, there is no warrant for such claims. They are built upon idle fantasy, and perhaps upon the scholarly urge to draw and exaggerate distinctions where no significant differences exist. The philosophies of Sāṃkhya and Yoga are, as I have acknowledged, firmly embedded within a soteriological project, which is directed ultimately towards a transcendence of rational thought and the flowering of mystical (supra-rational) revelation. But up until the point

⁶ See e.g. Deussen, who claims that “monism is the natural standpoint of philosophy, and wherever dualism has appeared in its history it has always been the consequence of antecedent stress and difficulty, and as it were a symptom of the wane of the philosophising spirit”, and that “the dualism of [...] Sāṃkhya” is “to be conceived as the consequence of a natural disintegration of the doctrine of the Upanishads” (1919: 244–45).

⁷ The following words of caution from van Buitenen are apt here: “It is always difficult to prove one’s case by calling on the upaniṣads as witnesses: they are at once too willing and too evasive” (1957a: 21).

of that final revelation, rational philosophy is not abandoned, and nor is it compromised in order to align its insights more neatly with the supposedly unerring proclamations of Upaniṣadic sages. The doctrine of metaphysical dualism is justified not on the basis of *ipse dixit*—"thus it was said in this or that Upaniṣad"—but, rather, upon the basis that (a) experience is an undeniable fact, and (b) for experience to occur there must be at least *two* things present. A single undifferentiated principle is simply not enough to explain the possibility of experience, which is why so-called "nondualist" systems invariably sidestep any attempt to philosophically validate their central metaphysical claim, and resort instead to mere dogmatic assertion (whether it be their own or that of some "infallible" scripture).⁸ The two "things" or "principles" in question—namely *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*—have typically been characterised as subject and object, or self and world, which labels have allowed interpreters to assume on behalf of Sāṃkhya and Yoga an inflexible realist stance concerning empirical objects. But as I have shown (particularly in chapters 4 and 6), this is an overly crude representation of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga dualism. It is not the experiencing subject and the world "out there" that these systems are keen to distinguish between; it is, rather (and far more subtly and sophisticatedly), the pure transcendental ground of consciousness on the one hand, and the transcendental ground of phenomena on the other. *Puruṣa* is not straightforwardly "the subject", just as *prakṛti* is not straightforwardly "the object" (or even the "world-ground"—à la Feuerstein). Yet they are what, in combination, make subjectivity and hence objectivity possible. They are, to use the Kantian terminology that I consider to be so helpful here, the co-ultimate *conditions* of the subject-object relation.

Monistic systems are incapable of accounting for experience. Modern versions of physicalism, for example, have a great deal to say about the neurophysiological *correlates* of phenomenal consciousness, but nothing whatsoever to say about the experiences themselves, because experiences are simply not "physical" in any meaningful sense. Meanwhile, "anomalous" or "neutral" monism—according to which physical and mental facts can be reduced to some more primordial, yet unknown (or unknowable), substance—is merely an attempt to retain the façade of philosophical respectability that monism is supposed by many to possess while simultaneously admitting the substance-dualist's point that mental things and physical things constitute two radically dichotomous kinds of reality. It therefore suspends

⁸ The philosophical incoherence of nondualism has been noted by Frits Staal: "there are certain metaphysical theories that can be said to be unintelligible in the sense that they try to point at what cannot be understood. Understanding requires duality, for example, if not multiplicity. Accordingly, in such philosophies as the Advaita Vedānta, according to which reality is nondual, reality cannot be understood" (1975: 4).

philosophising in favour of wishful thinking.⁹ And, finally, absolute idealism, or mental monism, by reducing even the ground of phenomena to the transcendental ego (or mind, or spirit, etc.), thereby forecloses the possibility of an encounter between those two things, which encounter is of course necessary for experience to happen. Such a monism, if it is not to deny experience any existence at all (which would hardly be a sustainable or credible position), is obliged to posit the spontaneous emergence of phenomena either out of nothing (as “mere appearances” with no ontological foundation) or out of something that is, in its essence, utterly non-phenomenal, i.e. the transcendental ego; neither of which positions amounts to anything more than the construction of a myth.

Classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga appear to have seen the pitfalls associated with monism and to have resisted its seductive lure. If experience exists—which it evidently does, since its denial cannot even be coherently formulated—then there must be (a) something that *appears* and (b) something *to which* or *in which* the appearance takes place. According to Sāṃkhya and Yoga, that which appears must have formal existence (*sattva*), activity (*rajas*), and limitation (*tamas*), and does not manifest directly as objects, but as the twenty-three “manifest principles” (which might better be referred to as “principles of manifestation”) that together bring forth the objects of experience. I can see no failing or weakness here; only a highly perceptive and surprisingly philosophically advanced analysis of the factors that make experience possible.

The principles of manifestation exist only so long as the source of consciousness (*puruṣa*) misidentifies with them. This misidentification is said to be “beginningless” (*anādi*, e.g. *YBh* 2.22), and presumably this is because it does not describe an historical event, but is intended to explicate the situation in which we find ourselves here and now. One feels sensations and responds to them as though it were really *oneself* that had been affected by them; and yet in quieter, more contemplative, moments one understands that those felt sensations merely arise and then dissolve away, like ripples upon the surface of a pool of water. “I,” in my true essence, have undergone no change. Similarly, when performing an action, I imagine that “I” am doing it, to serve some purpose, to satisfy some desire that I take to be mine; yet if I slow down, pause, consider what it is I’m doing more carefully, I start to see that it is part of an extended and interconnected web of impulses, events, and reactions to events, none of which

⁹ The phrase “neutral monism” is due to Bertrand Russell (1954), while “anomalous monism” was coined more recently by Donald Davidson (1980, essay 11). The concepts, and respective defences of them, that Russell and Davidson advance are, needless to say, not identical; but this is not the place to discuss them at length. Cf. Galen Strawson (1994: 96–97): “I take it [‘neutral monism’] to be the view that although the universe is indeed composed of one fundamental kind of stuff, this stuff is neither mental nor physical. Or rather, it is neither mental nor physical as we currently understand these terms.”

are genuinely initiated by my inner contemplative self. The desires and impulses, rather, emerge from some deep, dark reservoir, and the action begins to take place even before I have consciously acknowledged the need to perform it. If both the desire, or will, and the action itself *precede* my awareness of them, how can they really be *mine*?

Once the sensations, actions, desires, and—more inwardly still—the thoughts, and the concepts those thoughts comprise, have been disidentified with, such concepts, thoughts, desires, etc. do not disappear immediately; they continue to whirl around as though perpetually generating their own momentum, and I repeatedly get drawn back into that cascading torrent of phenomena (*pratyaya-sarga*). However, through continual practice—through sitting still, regulating and intermittently suspending the respiratory rhythm, attending to a specific mental object in order to reduce the manifold of phenomena to the barest minimum; and, having let go of the mental object, observing detachedly the inner space that remains, a little less cluttered than before—the degree of centredness, of stability, incrementally increases, and the whirling torrent becomes a steady flow. And I can well imagine that, eventually, it may become a mere trickle, and then a drip; and then—nothing (I can imagine) at all.

This is the practice of yoga, and it is given theoretical expression in the philosophies of the Yoga and Sāṃkhya darśanas. There is not a germ of realism in it. The thoughts and sensations, etc., are, admittedly, not constituted by the ultimate self, but neither do they exist independently of it. With the dawning of the inner knowingness of non-identity with the manifest principles comes the twilight of the principles themselves. Their unmanifest ground (*avyakta*) remains, and hence is real. But insofar as it is unmanifest it has no bearing upon the purity of puruṣa's aloneness. The manifest principles have gone—since they were crucially dependent upon puruṣa's misidentification with them—and thus also gone is any hint of phenomenal existence. This is why the imputation of realism to these systems is thoroughly mistaken, and, indeed, pernicious. And, correspondingly, it is why I refer to the much needed corrective that is provided in this study of their metaphysics and soteriology as a *nonrealist* interpretation of classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga.

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Appendix A

The Text of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*

BELOW is the complete Sanskrit text, totalling seventy-two distiches, of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* in both Devanāgarī and Roman script, plus a new translation into English by myself.¹ There is at present no critical edition of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, but differences between the available editions are extremely minor. In some instances I have mentioned discrepancies between different editions in footnotes, although it should not be assumed that every such discrepancy has been noted. In preparing this appendix I have consulted all the editions and translations of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* that are listed under “Primary Sources” in the Bibliography, and of these I have given most attention to the respective editions and translations by Jhā (1896), Suryanarayana Sastri (1948), and Larson (1979). I have also benefitted greatly from the assistance of Monier-Williams’ monumental *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* and also the *Glossary of the Sāṃkhyakārikā* by Digambarji et al. (1989).

I considered also including in this appendix a full translation of the *Yogasūtra*, but decided against it on the following two grounds. Firstly, although the *Yogasūtra* is certainly a work of enormous importance for this study, it is not as systematic and coherent a text as is the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*. For this reason an understanding of the passages from the *Yogasūtra* that are quoted in the foregoing chapters of this study will not, in my view, be significantly enhanced by the inclusion of a translation of the text as a whole. In the case of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, however, the more systematic and progressive nature of its structure increases the usefulness of being able to read its verses within their broader context. Secondly, the textual format known as the *sūtra* is terse to the point of obscurity, and many passages require an accompanying commentary in order for any sense to be made of them. In view of this fact, by merely providing my own translation of the *Yogasūtra* I would not necessarily be clarifying for the reader anything concerning the meaning of the text, but would be adding just another more-or-less opaque version of it to the numberless editions that exist already. The *kārikā* format in which the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* is composed is also apophthegmatic, but far less stringently so than that of the *sūtra*; and the text is therefore more capable of standing on its own without the support of a verse-by-verse commentary. I could, of course, have translated the *Yogasūtra* with a com-

¹ The editions of Suryanarayana Sastri and Larson include a seventy-third *kārikā*, even though, since it appears only in the commentary of Māṭhara, it is likely to have been added by Māṭhara himself. I have, in any case, included this extra *kārikā* in footnote 28.

mentary alongside it, but such a project would have been unduly extravagant for a mere appendix.

I freely admit that any translation will contain certain biases in favour of the translator's own particular interpretation of the original text. By being aware of this fact throughout the process of translation, however, I hope that I have avoided any serious distortions which might, had I been less alert, have slipped in. The inclusion of the original text will, in any event, make it easier for scholars of Sanskrit to detect any deficiencies in my translation. I have endeavoured to keep bracketed interpolations in the translation to a minimum, and the relatively brief elaborations of the text that I provide in footnotes are not intended to constitute anything approaching a full explanation. Inevitably this will leave the meaning of some *kārikās* far from obvious. But my purpose here is principally to supplement the interpretive investigation that makes up the main body of this study, and not to either duplicate or try to surpass that investigation with an extensive exegesis.

The font that I have used for the Devanāgarī script is, for the most part, the one known as xdvng. Its range of characters to represent conjunct consonants is not fully comprehensive, and hence, in the case of “क्त” (i.e. क + त), I have used the Shusha font, and in other places I have resorted to slightly unconventional forms of conjunction. These should not, however, detract from the overall legibility of the text.

THE SĀMĀKHYAKĀRIKĀ IN DEVANĀGARĪ AND ROMAN SCRIPT, AND IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

1

दुःखत्रयाभिघाताज्जिज्ञासा तत्पघातके हेतौ ।

दृष्टे सा ऽपार्था चेन्नैकान्तात्यन्ततो ऽभावात् ॥ १ ॥

*duḥkhatrayābhighātāj jijñāsā tad apaghātake
hetau /*

*dr̥ṣṭe sā 'pārthā cen naikāntātyantato 'bhāvāt
// 1 //*

Due to the affliction of threefold oppression, the inquiry into its removal [arises]; [if said to be] pointless because obvious [means exist], this is not so, for such means are neither singularly directed nor conclusive.

2

दृष्टवदानुश्रविकः स ह्यविशुद्धिक्षयातिशययुक्तः ।

तद्विपरीतः श्रेयान् व्यक्ताव्यक्तज्ञविज्ञानात् ॥ २ ॥

dr̥ṣṭavad ānuśravikaḥ sa hy

aviśuddhikṣayātiśayayuktaḥ /

tad viparītaḥ śreyān vyaktāvyaktajñavijñānāt

// 2 //

The heard [method] is like the obvious, as it is conjoined with impurity, corruption, and excess. The superior and opposite of that [comes] from the discrimination of the manifest, the unmanifest, and the knower.

3

मूलप्रकृतिरविकृतिर्महदाद्याः प्रकृतिविकृतयः सप्त ।

षोडशकस्तु विकारो न प्रकृतिर्न विकृतिः पुरुषः ॥ ३ ॥

mūlaprakṛtir avikṛtir mahad ādyāḥ

prakṛtivyakṛtayaḥ sapta /

ṣoḍaśakas tu vikāro na prakṛtir na vikṛtiḥ

puruṣaḥ // 3 //

Root-procreativity (*mūlaprakṛti*) is uncreated; the seven—"the great" (*mahat*) and the others—are productive and produced; the sixteen, meanwhile, are [merely] produced; *puruṣa* is neither productive nor produced.

4

दृष्टमनुमानमाप्तवचनं च सर्वप्रमाणसिद्धत्वात् ।
त्रिविधम्प्रमाणमिष्टं प्रमेयसिद्धिः प्रमाणाद्धि ॥ ४ ॥

*drṣṭam anumānam āptavacanam ca
sarvapramāṇasiddhatvāt /
trividham pramāṇam iṣṭam prameyasiddhiḥ
pramāṇād dhi ॥ 4 ॥*

The attainment of knowledge is based on [certain] ways of knowing; the accepted ways are three—perceiving, inferring, and reception of verbal testimony—as these cover all ways of knowing.

5

प्रतिविषयाध्यवसायो दृष्टं त्रिविधमनुमानमाख्यातम् ।
तल्लिङ्गलिङ्गिपूर्वकम् आप्तश्रुतिराप्तवचनं तु ॥ ५ ॥

*prativiṣayādhyavasāyo drṣṭam trividham
anumānam ākhyātam /
tal liṅgaliṅgipūrvakam āptaśrutir āptavacanam
tu ॥ 5 ॥*

Perceiving is the discernment of particular objects; inference, which is said to be three-fold, is the tracing of the mark-bearer from its indicating mark; reception of verbal testimony, meanwhile, is reception of *śruti*.

6

सामान्यतस्तु दृष्टात् अतीन्द्रियाणाम्प्रतीतिरनुमानात् ।
तस्मदपि चसिद्धं परोक्षमागमात् सिद्धम् ॥ ६ ॥

*sāmānyatas tu drṣṭāt atīndriyāṇām pratītir²
anumānāt /
tasmad api cāsiddham parokṣam āgamāt siddham
॥ 6 ॥*

Inference by analogy ascertains what is beyond the sense-capacities; and what is unaccomplishable even by that is established by verbal testimony.

² Some editions have *prasiddhir* in place of *pratītir*. Both terms can have the sense of "ascertaining" or "accomplishing".

7

अतिदूरात् सामीप्यात् इन्द्रियघातान्मनोऽनवस्थानात् ।
सौक्ष्म्याद् व्यवधानात् अभिभवात् समानाभिहाराच्च
॥ ७ ॥

*atidūrāt sāmīpyāt indriyaghātān
mano'navasthānāt /
saukṣmyād vyavadhānāt abhibhavāt
samānābhihārāc ca ॥ 7 ॥*

[Something may be imperceptible] due to: remoteness, closeness, sensory impairment, instability of mind, subtlety, obscuration, suppression, similarity with something else.

8

सौक्ष्म्यात्तदनुपलब्धिनाभावात् कार्यतस्तदुपलब्धेः ।
महदादि तच्च कार्यं प्रकृतिसरूपं विरूपं च ॥ ८ ॥

*saukṣmyāt tad anupalabdhir nābhāvāt kāryatas
tad upalabdheḥ /
mahad ādi tac ca kāryaṃ prakṛtisarūpaṃ
virūpaṃ ca ॥ 8 ॥*

The non-apprehension of that [i.e. *prakṛti*] is due to subtlety, not non-existence; it is apprehended by means of its effects. Its effects—*mahat* and the others—are both with and without the nature (*rūpa*) of *prakṛti*.³

9

असदकरणादुपादानग्रहणात् सर्वसंभवाभावात् ।
शक्तस्य शक्यकरणात् कारणभावाच्च सत् कार्यम् ॥ ९ ॥

*asad akaraṇād upādānagrahaṇāt
sarvasambhavābhāvāt /
śaktasya śakyakaraṇāt kāraṇabhāvāc ca sat
kāryam ॥ 9 ॥*

The [formally] existent [must be] an effect due to:⁴ the non-causation of non-being; the

³ Cf. my discussion of *rūpa* at p. 127 fn.10.

⁴ For an account of my interpretation of this *kārikā*, see pp. 129–30. As a general point, it should be noted that the use of the ablative case can be ambiguous: its meaning can be either that (a) the existence of the proposition's subject "is due to" (or "is caused by", etc.) such-and-such factors, or (b) "due to" such-and-such factors we must *logically infer* that the subject exists. The first of these senses has an ontological emphasis, whereas the second has an epistemological one. In this *kārikā* I have insinuated that the latter emphasis is primary by inserting the expression "must be". It is my view that this

apprehension of a material cause; the non-production of everything [from everything]; the possibility of causation [only] from that which is capable; and the nature of the cause.

10

हेतुमदनित्यमव्यापि सक्रियमनेकमाश्रितं लिङ्गम् ।
सावयवं परतन्त्रं व्यक्तं विपरीतमव्यक्तम् ॥ १० ॥
*hetumad anityam avyāpi sakriyam anekam āśritaṃ liṅgam /
sāvayavaṃ paratantraṃ vyaktaṃ viparītam avyaktam // 10 //*

The manifest is caused, temporal, spatially limited, active, non-singular, dependent, a cipher, composite, conditioned; the unmanifest is the opposite.

11

त्रिगुणमविवेकि विषयः सामान्यमचेतनम्प्रसवधर्मि ।
व्यक्तं तथा प्रधानम् तद्विपरीतस्तथा च पुमान् ॥ ११ ॥
*triguṇam aviveki viśayaḥ sāmānyam acetanam prasavadharmi /
vyaktaṃ tathā pradhānam tad viparītaṃ tathā ca pumān // 11 //*

The manifest as well as *pradhāna* (i.e. the unmanifest) are tripartite, undiscriminated, objectual, universal, non-conscious, productive; and *pumān* (i.e. *puruṣa*, the self) is the opposite of these.

12

प्रीत्यप्रीतिविषादात्मकाः प्रकाशप्रवृत्तिनियमार्थाः ।
अन्योन्याभिभवाश्रयजननमिधुनवृत्तयश्च गुणाः ॥ १२ ॥
*prītyaprīti viśādātmaḥ /
prakāśapravṛttinīyamārthāḥ /
anyonyābhibhavāśrayajanana mithunavṛttayaś ca guṇāḥ // 12 //*

Of the nature of gladness, perturbation, and stupefaction; serving to illuminate, activate, and restrain; the strands (*guṇas*) subjugate, support, generate, and combine with one another.

epistemological emphasis is to be regarded as primary also in subsequent *kārikās*, such as 15–19, although I have in most instances retained at least a degree of ambiguity in the translation in order to better reflect the original text.

13

सत्त्वं लघु प्रकाशकमिष्टमुपष्टम्भकं चलं च रजः ।
गुरु वरणकमेव तमः प्रदीपवच्चार्थतो वृत्तिः ॥ १३ ॥
*sattvaṃ laghu prakāśakam iṣṭam upaṣṭambhakam calaṃ ca rajaḥ /
guru varaṇakam eva tamaḥ pradīpavac cārthato vṛttiḥ // 13 //*

Sattva is light and illuminating; *rajas* is impelling and moving; *tamas* is heavy and delimiting; and their purpose is to function like a lamp.

14

अविवेक्यादेः सिद्धिस्त्रैगुण्यात्तद्विपर्ययाभावात् ।
कारणगुणात्मकत्वात्कार्यस्याव्यक्तमपि सिद्धम् ॥ १४ ॥
*avivekyādeḥ siddhis⁵ traiguṇyāt tad viparyayābhāvāt /
kāraṇaguṇātmakatvāt kāryasyāvyaktam api siddham // 14 //*

Undiscriminatedness and the other [qualities] are established due to the tripartition, and to the non-existence [of the three *guṇas*] in the opposite of that. The unmanifest is established [as having the same nature as the manifest] due to the *guṇa*-nature of the effect being also that of the cause.

15

भेदानां परिमाणात् समन्वयात् शक्तिः प्रवृत्तेः ।
कारणकार्यविभागादविभागाद्वैश्वरूप्यस्य ॥ १५ ॥
*bhedānāṃ parimāṇāt samanvayāt śaktiḥ⁶ pravṛtteś ca /
kāraṇakāryavibhāgād avibhāgād vaiśvarūpyasya // 15 //*

Due to: the finitude of differentiated [objects], homogeneity, the procession from potency, the distinction between cause and effect, and the undivided form of the world—⁷

⁵ Some editions read *avivekyādiḥ siddhas*; cf. Suryanarayana Sastri 1948: 33.

⁶ Jhā's edition (1896: 33) has *kāryataḥ* ("effective-ness") in place of *śaktiḥ* ("potency").

⁷ This *kārikā* does not stand on its own but must be read in conjunction with that which follows.

16

कारणमस्त्यव्यक्तम् प्रवर्तते त्रिगुणतः समुदयाच्च ।
परिणामतः सलिलवत् प्रतिप्रतिगुणाश्रयविशेषात्
॥ १६ ॥

*kāraṇam asty avyaktam pravartate triguṇataḥ
samudayāc ca /
pariṇāmataḥ salilavat pratipratiguṇāśraya-
viśeṣāt // 16 //*

—the unmanifest is the cause, productive due to the combination of the three *guṇas*, and transformable fluidly in accordance with the specific residing place of the various *guṇas*.

17

संघातपरार्थत्वात् त्रिगुणादिविपर्ययादधिष्ठानात् ।
पुरुषो ऽस्ति भोक्तृभावात्केवल्यार्थं प्रवृत्तेः ॥ १७ ॥
*saṃghātaparārthatvāt triguṇādiviparyayād
adīṣṭhānāt /
puruṣo 'sti bhoktrbhāvāt kaivalyārtham pravṛtteḥ
ca // 17 //*

Puruṣa exists due to:⁸ composites [being] for another's sake, the opposite of the three *guṇas* etc., [the need for] a controller, [the need for] an enjoyer, and the process [being] for the purpose of aloneness.

18

जननमरणकरणानां प्रतिनियमादयुगपत्प्रवृत्तेः ।
पुरुषबहुत्वं सिद्धं त्रैगुण्यविपर्ययाच्चैव ॥ १८ ॥
*jananamaraṇakaraṇānāṃ pratinīyamād
ayugapat pravṛtteḥ ca /
puruṣabahutvaṃ siddham traiguṇyaviparyayāc
caiva // 18 //*

Due to various patterns of birth, death, and capacities, and to the disjunction of activities, *puruṣa*'s multiplicity is established; and also due to contrariety of the three *guṇas*.

19

तस्माच्च विपर्ययासात्सिद्धं साक्षित्वमस्य पुरुषस्य ।
केवल्यम्माध्यस्थं द्रष्टृत्वमकर्तृभावश्च ॥ १९ ॥

⁸Or: "must be supposed to exist" (see fn.4 above).

*tasmāc ca viparyāsāt siddham sākṣitvam asya
puruṣasya /
kaivalyam mādhyasthyaṃ draṣṭṛtvam
akartṛbhāvaś ca // 19 //*

And thus, due to [its being] the opposite [of *prakṛti*], the witnessing, aloneness, equanimity, awareness, and inactivity of *puruṣa* is established.

20

तस्मात्तत्संयोगादचेतनं चेतनावदिव लिङ्गम् ।
गुणकर्तृत्वे च तथा कर्तेव भवत्युदासीनः ॥ २० ॥
*tasmāt tat saṃyogād acetanam cetanāvad iva
liṅgam /
guṇakartṛtve ca tathā karteḥ bhavaty udāsīnaḥ //
20 //*

Due to the conjunction of those [two, i.e. *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*] the non-conscious *liṅga* appears as though conscious, and similarly, owing to the activity of the *guṇas*, the non-engaged appears as though active.

21

पुरुषस्य दर्शनार्थं केवल्यार्थं तथा प्रधानस्य ।
पङ्गवन्धवदुभयोरपि संयोगस्तत्कृतः सर्गः ॥ २१ ॥
*puruṣasya darśanārtham kaivalyārtham tathā
pradhānasya /
paṅgvandhavat ubhayor api saṃyogas tatkrtaḥ
sargaḥ // 21 //*

For the purpose of perceiving *pradhāna*, and for the purpose of *puruṣa*'s aloneness, the two [come together] like the blind and the lame; that conjunction is the creative surge.⁹

22

प्रकृतेर्महांस्ततो ऽहङ्कारस्तस्माद्गणश्च षोडशकः ।
तस्मादपि षोडशकात्पञ्चभ्यः पञ्च भूतानि ॥ २२ ॥
*prakṛter mahāṃs tato 'haṅkāras tasmād gaṇaś ca
ṣoḍaśakaḥ /
tasmād api ṣoḍaśakāt pañcabhyaḥ pañca bhūtāni
// 22 //*

⁹Despite its etymological proximity, "surge" does not quite convey the full sense of *sarga*. The latter term often does have the sense of flowing, spewing forth, emerging, and so on, but it can also have the sense of a realm of existence (cf. SK 53, 54).

From *prakṛti* [comes¹⁰] the great; from that, egoity; and from that, the group of sixteen; again, from five of those sixteen, the five elements.

23

अध्यवसायो बुद्धिर्धर्मो ज्ञानं विराग ऐश्वर्यम् ।

सात्त्विकमेतद्रूपं तामसमस्माद्विपर्यस्तम् ॥ २३ ॥

*adhyavasāyo buddhir dharmo jñānaṃ virāga
aiśvaryaṃ /
sāttvikam etad rūpaṃ tāmasam asmād
viparyastam ॥ 23 ॥*

Buddhi is discernment, its lucid (*sāttvika*) form [comprising] *dharma*, knowledge, non-attachment, [and] masterfulness, and its darkened (*tāmasa*) form [comprising] the opposite.

24

अभिमानो ऽहङ्कारस्तस्माद्विद्विधः प्रवर्तते सर्गः ।

एकादशकश्च गणस्तन्मात्रपञ्चकश्चैव ॥ २४ ॥

*abhimāno 'haṅkāras tasmād dvividhaḥ
pravartate sargaḥ /
ekādaśakaś ca gaṇas tanmātrapañcakaś caiva
॥ 24 ॥*

The thought of self is egoity; from that, a twofold surgence proceeds, namely the group of eleven and the five *tanmātras*.

25

सात्त्विक एकादशकः प्रवर्तते वैकृतादहङ्कारात् ।

भूतादेस्तन्मात्रः स तामसः तैजसादुभयम् ॥ २५ ॥

*sāttvika ekādaśakaḥ pravartate vaikṛtād
ahaṅkārat /
bhūtādes tanmātraḥ sa tāmasaḥ taijasād
ubhayam ॥ 25 ॥*

The lucid (*sāttvika*) eleven proceed from the modified egoity; from the source of the ele-

ments,¹¹ which is opaque (*tāmasa*), the *tanmātras* [proceed]; from the fiery (*taijasa*), both [proceed].

26

बुद्धीन्द्रियाणि चक्षुः श्रोत्रघ्राणरसनत्वगाख्यानि ।

वाक्पाणिपादपायूपस्थान् कर्मेन्द्रियाणयाहु ॥ २६ ॥

*buddhīndriyāṇi cakṣuḥ
śrotraghrāṇarasanatvagākhyāni /
vākpāṇipādapāyūpasthān karmendriyāṇyāhu
॥ 26 ॥*

Sense-capacities is the term for seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching; voice, hand, foot, anus, and underparts are called action-capacities.

27

उभयात्मकमत्र मनः सङ्कल्पकमिन्द्रियं च साधर्म्यात् ।

गुणपरिणामविशेषान्नानात्वं बाह्यभेदाच्च ॥ २७ ॥

*ubhayātmakam atra manaḥ saṅkalpakam
indriyaṃ ca sādharmyāt /
guṇapariṇāmaviśeṣān nānātvam bāhyabhedāś ca
॥ 27 ॥*

In this regard, of the essence of both is mind (*manas*), which is synthesis and is, due to its similarity, a capacity. Variousness and external differences are due to the specific modifications of the *guṇas*.

28

शब्दादिषु पञ्चानामालोचनमात्रमिष्यते वृत्तिः ।

वचनादानविहरणोत्सर्गानन्दाच्च पञ्चानाम् ॥ २८ ॥

*śabdādiṣu pañcānām ālocanamātram iṣyate
vṛttiḥ /
vacanādānaviharaṇotsargānandāś ca pañcānām
॥ 28 ॥*

The operation (*vṛtti*) of the five [sense-capacities] is held to be bare awareness of sound and so forth; speaking, grasping, walking, excreting, and [sexual] pleasure are [the operations of] the five [action-capacities].

¹⁰ The fact that *prakṛti* is in the ablative case indicates that “the great” (*mahat*) is in a relation of dependence upon it, although the nature of the dependence is not made explicit. Therefore, the interpolated “comes” should not, in my view, be necessarily assumed to denote material causation. The same applies to the relations between the other “productive” and “produced” manifest principles.

¹¹ It would appear that “source of the elements” (*bhūtādi*) is either an epithet of *ahaṅkāra* or an aspect thereof.

29

स्वालक्षणं वृत्तिस्त्रयस्य सैषा भवत्यसामान्या ।

सामान्यकरणवृत्तिः प्राणाद्या वायवः पञ्च ॥ २९ ॥

*svālakṣaṇyaṃ vṛttis trayasya saiṣā bhavaty
asāmānyā /
sāmānyakaraṇavṛttiḥ prāṇādyā vāyavaḥ pañca
// 29 //*

Each of the three¹² is distinguished by its own operation, which manifests differently [from those of the other two]. Their common operation consists in the five vital currents, [namely] *prāṇa* and the others.¹³

30

युगपच्चतुष्टयस्य तु वृत्तिः क्रमशश्च तस्य निर्दिष्टा ।

दृष्टे तथाप्यदृष्टे त्रयस्य तत्पूर्विका वृत्तिः ॥ ३० ॥

*yugapac catuṣṭayasya tu vṛttiḥ kramaśaś ca tasya
nirdiṣṭā /
dr̥ṣṭe tathāpy adr̥ṣṭe trayasya tatpūrvikā vṛttiḥ
// 30 //*

The operation of the four¹⁴ with regard to what is present to perception is both instantaneous and progressive; while in the case of what is imperceptible, the operation of the three is preceded by that [i.e. by the perception of a present object].

31

स्वां स्वां प्रतिपद्यन्ते परस्पराकृतहेतुकां वृत्तिम् ।

पुरुषार्थ एव हेतुर्न केनचित्कार्यते करणम् ॥ ३१ ॥

*svām svām pratipadyante parasparākūtahetukāṃ
vṛttim /
puruṣārtha eva hetur na kenacit kāryate karaṇam
// 31 //*

The respective operations are performed in cooperation with one another from a com-

¹² It is almost certainly the three members of the "inner instrument" (*antaḥkaraṇa*) that are being referred to here (cf. *kārikā* 33 below), namely *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, and *manas*. Larson thinks that "the three" denotes "the *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra* and senses" (1979: 265), but I can see no basis for this view.

¹³ According to classical Indian physiology there are five main currents or winds which service different regions of the body. These are usually called, respectively: *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *samāna*, *udāna*, *vyāna*.

¹⁴ "The four" here is generally agreed to stand for "the three" of the preceding *kārikā* plus any one of the sense-capacities.

mon impulse, the sole end being that of *puruṣa*; nothing else activates the instrument.

32

करणं त्रयोदशविधम् तदाहरणधारणप्रकाशकरम् ।

कार्यं च तस्य दशधाहार्यं धार्यं प्रकाश्यं च ॥ ३२ ॥

*karaṇaṃ trayodaśavidham
tadāharaṇadhāraṇaprakāśakaram /
kāryaṃ ca tasya daśadhāhāryaṃ dhāryaṃ
prakāśyaṃ ca // 32 //*

The instrument, comprising thirteen parts,¹⁵ is grasping, holding, and illuminating; and its object (*kārya*), which is tenfold,¹⁶ is grasped, held, and illuminated.

33

अन्तःकरणं त्रिविधम् दशधा बाह्यं त्रयस्य

विषयाग्न्यम् ।

साम्प्रतकालं बाह्यं त्रिकालमाभ्यन्तरं करणम् ॥ ३३ ॥

*antaḥkaraṇaṃ trividham daśadhā bāhyaṃ
trayasya viṣayākhyam /
sāmpratākālaṃ bāhyaṃ trikālam ābhyantaram
karaṇam // 33 //*

The inner instrument is threefold, the outer is tenfold [and] is held to be the domain of the three;¹⁷ the outer [operates in] the present moment [alone], the [inner] instrument in all three times.¹⁸

¹⁵ The thirteen parts are "the three" mentioned at *kārikās* 29 and 30 plus the sense-capacities and action-capacities (cf. *SK* 33).

¹⁶ i.e. the five *tanmātras* plus the five *bhūtas*. Larson asserts that "tenfold" is here "relating to the five senses and the five actions" (1979: 266), which assertion is presumably based on the fact that, in the following *kārikā*, the tenfold "outer instrument" appears to comprise the sense- and action-capacities. Larson's view is untenable, however, since the sense- and action-capacities have already been included within the thirteenfold instrument, with which the tenfold object is here being contrasted.

¹⁷ I have given here a fairly literal translation of the phrase *trayasya viṣayākhyam*. Some other translators (e.g. Suryanarayana Sastri and Jhā) try to make better sense of it by taking it to mean that the outer instrument makes objects known to the inner instrument. This may be a correct interpretation, but it requires some manipulation of the original text.

¹⁸ What seems to be meant here is that sensations and actions are always present occurrences whereas

34

बुद्धीन्द्रियाणि तेषां पञ्च विशेषाविशेषविषयाणि ।
वाग्भवति शब्दविषया शेषाणि तु पञ्चविषयाणि
॥ ३४ ॥

*buddhīndriyāṇi teṣāṃ pañca viśeṣāviśeṣaviṣayāṇi /
vāgbhavati śabdaviṣayā śeṣāṇi tu pañcaviṣayāṇi*
// 34 //

Of these, the five sense-capacities have specific and non-specific objects;¹⁹ the voice manifests sound-phenomena whereas the other remaining [action-capacities] have [all] five modes of phenomena.²⁰

35

सान्तःकरणा बुद्धिः सर्वं विषयमवगाहते यस्मात् ।
तस्मात् त्रिविधं करणं द्वारि द्वाराणि शेषाणि ॥ ३५ ॥

*sāntaḥkaraṇā buddhiḥ sarvaṃ viṣayam
avagāhate yasmāt /
tasmāt trividhaṃ karaṇam dvāri dvārāṇi śeṣāṇi*
// 35 //

Because *buddhi* along with the other inner instruments apprehends all objects, the three-fold instrument is the chamber, the rest being the doorways.

36

एते प्रदीपकल्पाः परस्परविलक्षणा गुणविशेषाः ।
कृत्स्नं पुरुषस्यार्थं प्रकाशय बुद्धौ प्रयच्छन्ति ॥ ३६ ॥

*ete pradīpakalpāḥ parasparavilakṣaṇā
guṇaviśeṣāḥ /
kṛtsnaṃ puruṣasyārthaṃ prakāśya buddhau
prayacchanti* // 36 //

These specifications of the *guṇas*, distinct from one another, present the whole [world] to *buddhi*, illuminating it like a lamp for the sake of *puruṣa*.

37

सर्वं प्रत्युपभोगं यस्मात्पुरुषस्य साधयति बुद्धिः ।

सैव च विशिनष्टि पुनः प्रधानपुरुषान्तरं सूक्ष्मम् ॥ ३७ ॥

*sarvaṃ praty upabhogaṃ yasmāt puruṣasya
sādhayati buddhiḥ /
saiva ca viśinaṣṭi punaḥ pradhānapuruṣāntaraṃ
sūkṣmaṃ* // 37 //

[This is] because *buddhi* gives rise to every particular enjoyment of the *puruṣa* and, furthermore, discloses the subtle difference between *pradhāna* and *puruṣa*.

38

तन्मात्राण्यविशेषाः तेभ्यो भूतानि पञ्च पञ्चभ्यः ।
एते स्मृता विशेषाः शान्ता घोराश्च मूढाश्च ॥ ३८ ॥

*tanmātrāṇy aviśeṣāḥ tebhyo bhūtāni pañca
pañcabhyaḥ /
ete smṛtā viśeṣāḥ śāntā ghorāś ca mūḍhāś ca*
// 38 //

The modes of sensory content (*tanmātras*) are non-specific; from these five [come] the five elements; these are regarded as specific, and as tranquil, disturbing, and delusive.

39

सूक्ष्मा मातापितृजाः सहप्रभृतैस्त्रिधा विशेषाः स्युः ।
सूक्ष्मास्तेषां नियताः मातापितृजा निवर्तन्ते ॥ ३९ ॥

*sūkṣmā mātāpitṛjāḥ saha prabhūtais tridhā
viśeṣāḥ syuḥ /
sūkṣmās teṣāṃ niyatāḥ mātāpitṛjā nivartante*
// 39 //

Subtle, born of mother and father, and elemental are the three specific types; of these, the subtle are permanent, [whereas those] born of mother and father are corruptible.²¹

40

पूर्वोत्पन्नमसक्तं नियतं महदादिसूक्ष्मपर्यन्तम् ।
संसरति निरुपभोगं भावैरधिवासितं लिङ्गम् ॥ ४० ॥

*pūrvotpannam asaktaṃ niyataṃ
mahadādisūkṣmaparyantam /
saṃsarati nirupabhogaṃ bhāvair adhivāsitaṃ
liṅgam* // 40 //

The *liṅga* is already existent, unrestricted, permanent, comprising “the great” and the

“inner” mental phenomena can concern the past (in memories) and the future (in anticipation) as well.

¹⁹ The “specific” objects are the *bhūtas* and the “non-specific” are the *tanmātras* (cf. SK 38).

²⁰ In other words, the other four action-capacities involve the manifestation or production of all five modes of sensory content (*tanmātras*).

²¹ It would appear that what is being referred to in this *kārikā* are three aspects of a person: the “subtle” (or mental), the physical body, and the “elemental” (or the forms of perceptual objects).

rest, down to the subtle;²² wandering without enjoyment, endowed with dispositions (*bhāvas*).

41

चित्रं यथाश्रयमृते स्थाण्वादिभ्यो विना यथा छाया ।
तद्वद्विना विशेषैर्न तिष्ठति निराश्रयं लिङ्गम् ॥ ४१ ॥

*citraṃ yathāśrayam ṛte sthāṇvādibhyo vinā yathā chāyā /
tadvad vinā viśeṣair na tiṣṭhati nirāśrayaṃ
liṅgam // 41 //*

Just as there is no picture without a support and no shadow without a post or suchlike, so the *liṅga* does not exist without the support of the specific.

42

पुरुषार्थहेतुकमिदं निमित्तनैमित्तिकप्रसङ्गेन ।
प्रकृतेर्विभुत्वयोगान्नटवद्व्यवतिष्ठते लिङ्गम् ॥ ४२ ॥

*puruṣārthahetukam idaṃ
nimittanaimittikaprasaṅgena /
prakṛter vibhutvayogān naṭavad vyavatiṣṭhate
liṅgam // 42 //*

This *liṅga*, motivated for the sake of *puruṣa*, by means of the association of causes and effects, and due to its connection with the manifestness of *prakṛti*, performs like a dancer.

43

सांसिद्धिकाश्च भावाः प्राकृतिका वैकृताश्च धर्माद्याः ।
दृष्टाः करणाश्रयिणः कार्याश्रयिणश्च कललाद्याः ॥ ४३ ॥

*sāmsiddhikāś ca bhāvāḥ prakṛtikā vaikṛtāś ca
dharmādyāḥ /
dṛṣṭāḥ karaṇāśrayinaḥ kāryāśrayinaś ca
kalalādyāḥ // 43 //*

The dispositions, [namely] *dharma* and the rest, both natural and acquired, are perceived to abide in the instrument, and the embryo and so forth abide in the object (or effect, *kārya*).

44

धर्मेण गमनमूर्ध्वम् गमनमधस्ताद्भवत्यधर्मेण ।

²² In this instance "the subtle" would seem to denote the *tanmātras*.

ज्ञानेन चापवर्गो विपर्ययादिष्यते बन्धः ॥ ४४ ॥

*dharmeṇa gamanam ūrdhvam gamanam
adhasṭād bhavaty adharmeṇa /
jñānena cāpavargo viparyayād iṣyate bandhaḥ
// 44 //*

By means of virtue (*dharma*) there is movement upwards, by means of non-virtue (*adharma*) there is movement downwards; by means of knowledge liberation is attained, and bondage is due to the opposite.

45

वैराग्यात् प्रकृतिलयः संसारो भवति
राजसाद्रागात् ।

ऐश्वर्यादविघातः विपर्ययात्तद्विपर्यासः ॥ ४५ ॥

*vairāgyāt prakṛtilayaḥ saṃsāro bhavati rājasād
rāgāt /
aiśvaryaṭ avighātaḥ viparyayāt tadviparyāsaḥ
// 45 //*

Prakṛti's dissolution occurs as a result of non-attachment, wandering²³ is due to attachment, which is impulsive; removal of obstructions is due to masterfulness, the reverse of that is due to the opposite.

46

एष प्रत्ययसर्गो विपर्ययाशक्तितुष्टिसिद्ध्याख्यः ।
गुणवैषम्यविमर्दात् तस्य च भेदास्तु पञ्चाशत् ॥ ४६ ॥

*eṣa pratyayasargo
viparyayāśaktituṣṭisiddhyākhyāḥ /
guṇavaiṣamyavimardāt tasya ca bhedās tu
pañcāśat // 46 //*

This is the effusion (*sarga*) of mental phenomena (*pratyaya*), comprising delusion, weakness, contentment, and excellence; and these are divided into fifty kinds according to the respective imbalance of the *guṇas*.

47

पञ्च विपर्ययभेदा भवन्त्यशक्तिश्च करणवैकल्यात् ।
अष्टाविंशतिभेदा तुष्टिर्नवधाष्टधा सिद्धिः ॥ ४७ ॥

*pañca viparyayabhedā bhavanty aśaktiś ca
karaṇavaikalyāt /*

²³ "Wandering" is a fairly literal translation of *saṃsāra*. It should be understood to mean "wandering through life, and from one lifetime to another". It implies rebirth.

aṣṭāviṃśatibhedā tuṣṭir navadhāṣṭadhā siddhiḥ
// 47 //

There are five kinds of delusion, and twenty-eight kinds of weakness due to defects in the instrument; contentment is ninefold, excellence eightfold.

48

भेदस्तमसोऽष्टविधः मोहस्य च दशविधो महामोहः ।
तामिस्रोऽष्टादशधा तथा भवत्यन्धतामिस्रः ॥ ४८ ॥

bhedas tamaso 'ṣṭavidhaḥ mohasya ca daśavidho mahāmohaḥ /
tāmisro 'ṣṭādaśadhā tathā bhavaty andhatāmisraḥ
// 48 //

There are eight kinds of dullness, and also of perplexity, ten kinds of great perplexity; depression is eighteenfold, as is intense depression.

49

एकादशेन्द्रियवधाः सह बुद्धिवधैरशक्तिरुद्दिष्टा ।
सप्तदश वधा बुद्धेर्विपर्ययात्तुष्टिसिद्धीनाम् ॥ ४९ ॥

ekādaśendriyavadhāḥ saha buddhivadhair aśaktir uddiṣṭā /
saptadaśa vadhā buddher viparyayāt tuṣṭisiddhīnām // 49 //

Impairments to the eleven capacities²⁴ along with *buddhi* are said to constitute weakness; impairments to *buddhi* are seventeen, due to the opposites of contentment and excellence.

50

आध्यात्मिकाश्चतस्रः प्रकृत्युपादानकालभाग्याख्याः ।
बाह्या विषयोपरमात् पञ्च नव तुष्टयोऽभिमताः ॥ ५० ॥

ādhyātmikāś chatasraḥ prakṛty upādānakālabhāgyākhyāḥ /
bāhyā viṣayoparamāt pañca nava tuṣṭayo 'bhimatāḥ // 50 //

Nine modes of contentment are distinguished; four are internal, concerning respectively disposition (or natural constitution, *prakṛti*), acquisition, time, and fortune; five are external, due to abstinence from [sensory] objects.

51

ऊहः शब्दोऽध्ययनं दुःखविघातास्त्रयः सुहृत्प्राप्तिः ।
दानं च सिद्धयोऽष्टौ सिद्धेः पूर्वोऽङ्कुशस्त्रिविधः ॥ ५१ ॥

ūhaḥ śabdo 'dhyayanam duḥkhavighātās trayāḥ suhṛtprāptiḥ /
dānam ca siddhayo 'ṣṭau siddheḥ pūrvo 'ṅkuśas trividhaḥ // 51 //

The eight ways of attaining excellence are: reasoning, [reception of] verbal instruction, study, eradication of the threefold distress, friendliness, and generosity; the previous three²⁵ are hindrances to excellence.

52

न विना भावैर्लिङ्गं न विना लिङ्गेन भावनिर्वृत्तिः ।
लिङ्गाख्यो भावाख्यः तस्माद्विविधः प्रवर्तते सर्गः
॥ ५२ ॥

na vinā bhāvair liṅgam na vinā liṅgena bhāvanir vṛttiḥ /
liṅgākhyo bhāvākhyāḥ tasmād dvividhaḥ pravartate sargaḥ // 52 //

Without the dispositions (*bhāvas*) the *liṅga* cannot operate, and without the *liṅga* the dispositions cannot operate; therefore a dual effusion proceeds, distinguishable as *liṅga* and disposition.

53

अष्टविकल्पो दैवस्तैर्यग्योनश्च पञ्चधा भवति ।
मानुषकश्चैकविधः समासतो भौतिकः सर्गः ॥ ५३ ॥

aṣṭavikalpo daivas tairyagyonāś ca pañcadhā bhavati /
mānuṣakaś caikavidhaḥ samāsato bhautikaḥ sargaḥ // 53 //

There are eight varieties of divine beings and five of [non-human] natural beings; mankind is singular; such, in brief, is the elemental realm (*sarga*).

54

ऊर्ध्वं सत्त्वविशालस्तमोविशालश्च मूलतः सर्गः ।
मध्ये रजोविशालो ब्रह्मादिस्तम्बपर्यन्तः ॥ ५४ ॥

ūrdhvaṃ sattvaviśālas tamoviśālaś ca mūlataḥ sargaḥ /

²⁴ i.e. the five *buddhīndriyas*, five *karmendriyas*, plus *manas*.

²⁵ i.e. delusion (*viparyaya*), weakness (*aśakti*), and contentment (*tuṣṭi*).

madhye rajoviśālo brahmādistambaparyantaḥ
// 54 //

The upper realm is pervaded by luminosity (*sattva*), and the base is pervaded by opacity (*tamas*); the middle is pervaded by activity (*rajas*); [such is the case] from Brahmā down to a blade of grass.

55

तत्र जरामरणकृतं दुःखं प्राप्नोति चेतनः पुरुषः ।
लिङ्गस्याविनिवृत्तेस्तस्माद्दुःखं स्वभावेन ॥ ५५ ॥

tatra jarāmaraṇakṛtaṃ duḥkhaṃ prāpnoti
cetanaḥ puruṣaḥ /
liṅgasyāvinivṛttes tasmād duḥkhaṃ svabhāvena //
55 //

Puruṣa, consciousness, acquires there the suffering created by decay and death until its deliverance from the *liṅga*; hence one's own nature is associated with suffering.

56

इत्येष प्रकृतिकृतो महदादिविशेषभूतपर्यन्तः ।
प्रतिपुरुषविमोक्षार्थं स्वार्थं इव परार्थं आरम्भः ॥ ५६ ॥

ity eṣa prakṛtikṛto
mahadādiviśeṣabhūtaparyantaḥ /
pratipuruṣavimokṣārthaṃ svārtha iva parārtha
ārambhaḥ // 56 //

This *prakṛti*-creation, from the great down to the specific elements, is for the sake of the liberation of each *puruṣa*, for the other's benefit as though for its own.

57

वत्सविवृद्धिनिमित्तं क्षीरस्य यथा प्रवृत्तिरजस्य ।
पुरुषविमोक्षनिमित्तं तथा प्रवृत्तिः प्रधानस्य ॥ ५७ ॥

vatsavivṛddhinimittaṃ kṣīrasya yathā pravṛttir
ajñasya /
puruṣavimokṣanimittaṃ tathā pravṛttiḥ
pradhānasya // 57 //

Just as the profusion of unknowing (*ajñā*) milk brings about the nourishment of the calf, so the profusion of *pradhāna* brings about the liberation of *puruṣa*.

58

औत्सुक्यनिवृत्त्यर्थं यथा क्रियासु प्रवर्तते लोकः ।
पुरुषस्य विमोक्षार्थं प्रवर्तते तद्वदव्यक्तम् ॥ ५८ ॥

autsukyanivṛttyarthaṃ yathā kriyāsu pravartate
lokaḥ /
puruṣasya vimokṣārthaṃ pravartate tadvad
avyaktaṃ // 58 //

Just as [in] the world actions are performed for the purpose of removing [i.e. fulfilling] a desire, so does the unmanifest perform for the purpose of the liberation of *puruṣa*.

59

रङ्गस्य दर्शयित्वा निवर्तते नर्तकी यथा नृत्यात् ।
पुरुषस्य तथात्मानं प्रकाशय विनिवर्तते प्रकृतिः ॥ ५९ ॥

raṅgasya darśayitvā nivartate nartakī yathā
nṛtyāt /
puruṣasya tathātmānaṃ prakāśya vinivartate
prakṛtiḥ // 59 //

Just as, having displayed herself before the gaze of the audience, the dancer desists from dancing, so *prakṛti* desists, having manifested herself to *puruṣa*.

60

नानाविधैरुपायैरुपकारिण्यनुपकारिणः पुंसः ।
गुणवत्यगुणस्य सतस्तस्यार्थमपार्थकं चरति ॥ ६० ॥

nānāvidhair upāyair upakāriṇy anupakāriṇaḥ
punṣaḥ /
guṇavatya guṇasya sataḥ tasyārtham apārthakaṃ
carati // 60 //

She, being endowed with the *guṇas*, moves without any benefit [to herself] for the sake of *punṣa* (i.e. *puruṣa*), who, being without *guṇas*, does not reciprocate.

61

प्रकृतेः सुकुमारातरं न किञ्चिदस्तीति मे मतिर्भवति ।
या दृष्टास्मीति पुनरं दर्शनमुपैति पुरुषस्य ॥ ६१ ॥

prakṛteḥ sukumārātaraṃ na kiñcid astīti me matir
bhavati /
yā dṛṣṭāsmīti punar na darśanam upaiti
puruṣasya // 61 //

In my view there is no-one more tender than *prakṛti*, who, saying "I have been seen," never again comes into *puruṣa*'s sight.

62

तस्मान्न बध्यतेऽद्धा न मुच्यते नापि संसरति कश्चित् ।
संसरति बध्यते मुच्यते च नानाश्रया प्रकृतिः ॥ ६२ ॥

*tasmān na badhyate 'ddhā na mucyate nāpi
saṃsarati kaścit /
saṃsarati badhyate mucyate ca nānāśrayā
prakṛtiḥ ॥ 62 ॥*

No-one, then, is bound, nor released, nor wanders; it is *prakṛti*, in its various abodes (*āśrayā*), that wanders, and is bound and released.

63

रूपैः सप्तभिरेव तु बध्नात्यात्मानमात्मना प्रकृतिः ।
सैव च पुरुषार्थं प्रति विमोचयत्येकरूपेण ॥ ६३ ॥

*rūpaiḥ saptabhir eva tu badhnāty ātmānam
ātmanā prakṛtiḥ /
saiva ca puruṣārtham prati vimocayaty
ekarūpeṇa ॥ 63 ॥*

Prakṛti binds herself by herself with the use of seven forms; and, for the sake of each *puruṣa*, liberates herself by means of one form.²⁶

64

एवं तत्त्वाभ्यासान्नास्मि न मे नाहमित्यपरिशेषम् ।
अविपर्ययाद्विशुद्धं केवलमुत्पद्यते ज्ञानम् ॥ ६४ ॥

*evaṃ tattvābhyāsān nāsmi na me nāham ity
aparīṣeṣam /
aviparyayād viśuddham kevalam utpadyate
jñānam ॥ 64 ॥*

Thus, from the assiduous practise of thatness, the knowledge arises that “I am not,” “not mine,” “not I”; which [knowledge], being free of delusion, is complete, pure, and singular.

²⁶ The eight “forms” (*rūpas*) here are usually assumed to be “dispositions” (*bhāvas*). It strikes me as being at least equally likely, however, that they are the modes of *prakṛti* divided into the following categories: (1) *avyakta* (the unmanifest); (2) *buddhi*; (3) *ahaṃkāra*; (4) *manas*; (5) *buddhīndriyas*; (6) *karmendriyas*; (7) *tanmātras*; and (8) *bhūtas*. It is when forms (2)–(8) dissolve into (1) that liberation occurs. This interpretation would also make more sense of SK 65.

65

तेन निवृत्तप्रसवामर्थवशात् सप्तरूपविनिवृत्ताम् ।
प्रकृतिं पश्यति पुरुषः प्रेक्षकवदवस्थितः स्वच्छः ॥ ६५ ॥

*tena nivṛttaprasavām arthavaśāt sap-
tarūpavinivṛttām /
prakṛtiṃ paśyati puruṣaḥ prekṣakavad avasthitaḥ
svacchaḥ²⁷ ॥ 65 ॥*

Then *puruṣa*, abiding [in itself] like a spectator, sees *prakṛti*, who has returned to inactivity and retreated from the seven forms due to her purpose being complete.

66

दृष्टा मयेत्युपेक्षक एकः दृष्टाहमित्युपरमत्यन्या ।
सति संयोगेऽपि तयोः प्रयोजनं नास्ति सर्गस्य ॥ ६६ ॥

*drṣṭā mayety upekṣaka ekaḥ drṣṭāhamity upar-
amaty anyā /
sati samyoge 'pi tayorḥ prayojanam nāsti sargasya
॥ 66 ॥*

“I have seen her,” says the spectating one; “I have been seen,” says the other, desisting; although the two remain in conjunction, there is no initiation of [further] surgence.

67

सम्यग्ज्ञानाधिगमाद् धर्मादीनामकारणप्राप्तौ ।
तिष्ठति संस्कारवशात् चक्रभ्रमिवद् धृतशरीरः ॥ ६७ ॥

*samyagjñānādhigamād
dharmādīnāmakāraṇaprāptau /
tiṣṭati saṃskāravaśāt cakrabhramivad
dhṛtaśarīraḥ ॥ 67 ॥*

Due to the attainment of perfect knowledge, virtue (*dharma*) and the rest have no impelling cause; [nevertheless,] the endowed body persists owing to the momentum of impressions, like a potter’s wheel.

68

प्राप्ते शरीरभेदे चरितार्थत्वात् प्रधानविनिवृत्तौ ।
ऐकान्तिकमात्यन्तिकमुभयं कैवल्यमाप्नोति ॥ ६८ ॥

²⁷ There is considerable disagreement among the early commentaries over what the final word in this *kārikā* should be. *GBh* and *Jayamaṅgalā* read *svasthaḥ* (“self-abiding”) whereas *STV* has *susthaḥ* (“well-placed”). I have here followed the *TK* and *YD* with *svacchaḥ*.

*prāpte śarīrabhede caritārthatvāt
pradhānavinivṛtau /
aikāntikam ātyantikam ubhayaṃ kaivalyam
āpnoti // 68 //*

Pradhāna being inactive, her purpose having been fulfilled, [*puruṣa*], upon separating from the body, attains aloneness (*kaivalya*), which is both singular and conclusive.

69

पुरुषार्थज्ञानमिदं गुह्यं परमर्षिणा समाख्यातम् ।
स्थित्युत्पत्तिप्रलयाश्चिन्त्यन्ते यत्र भूतानाम् ॥ ६९ ॥

*puruṣārthajñānam idaṃ guhyaṃ paramarṣiṇā
samākhyātam /
sthityutpattipralayāś cintyante yatra bhūtānām
// 69 //*

This esoteric knowledge of *puruṣa*'s goal, examining the existence, arising, and dissolution of entities, has been expounded by the highest sage.

70

एतत् पवित्रमग्र्यं मुनिरासुरयेऽनुकम्पया प्रददौ ।
आसुरिरपि पञ्चशिखाय तेन च बहुधा कृतं तन्त्रम्
॥ ७० ॥

*etat pavitram agryaṃ munir āsuraye 'nukampayā
pradadau /
āsurir api pañcaśikhāya tena ca bahudhā kṛtaṃ
tantram // 70 //*

The quiet monk first passed on this supreme means of purification, compassionately, to Āsuri; Āsuri, again, to Pañcaśikha, and by him the teaching was widely distributed.

71

शिष्यपरम्परयागतमीश्वरकृष्णेन चैतदार्याभिः ।
संक्षिप्तमार्यमतिना सम्यग्विज्ञाय सिद्धान्तम् ॥ ७१ ॥

*śiṣyaparamparayāgatam īśvarakṛṣṇena caitad
āryābhiḥ /
saṃkṣiptam āryamatinā samyag vijñāya
siddhāntam // 71 //*

Communicated via a tradition of disciples, this has been thoroughly expounded in *ārya* metre by the noble-minded Īśvarakṛṣṇa, attainer of ultimate knowledge.

72

सप्तत्यां किल येऽर्थास्तेऽर्थाः कृत्स्नस्य षष्टितन्त्रस्य ।
आख्यायिकाविरहिताः परवादविवर्जिताश्चापि ॥ ७२ ॥

*saptatyāṃ kila ye 'rthās te 'rthāḥ kṛtsnasya
ṣaṣṭitantrasya /
ākhyāyikāvirahitāḥ paravādvivarjitāś cāpi
// 72 //*

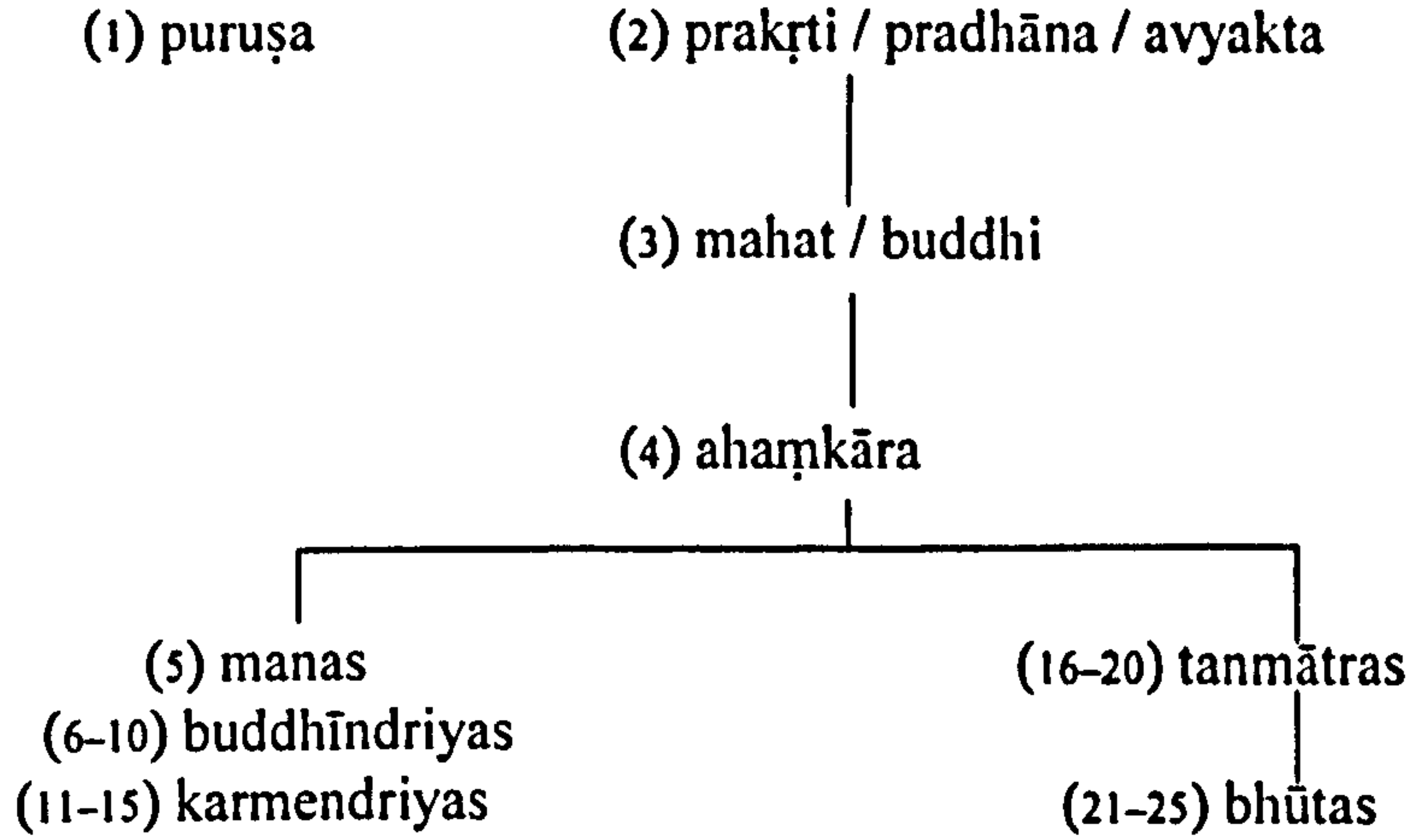
The topics of the seventy [verses] are indeed those of the entire "sixty doctrines" (*ṣaṣṭitantra*), though excluding illustrative stories and the consideration of opposing views.²⁸

²⁸ An extra kārikā that appears in Māhara's commentary reads: "Thus the content of this condensed exposition (*śāstra*) is not deficient, and is like an image of the great body of teachings (*tantra*) reflected in a mirror" (*tasmāt samāsa-dṛṣṭaṃ śāstram idaṃ nārthataś ca parihīnam / tantrasya ca brhanmūrter darpaṇasaṃkrāntam iva bimbam // 73 //*).

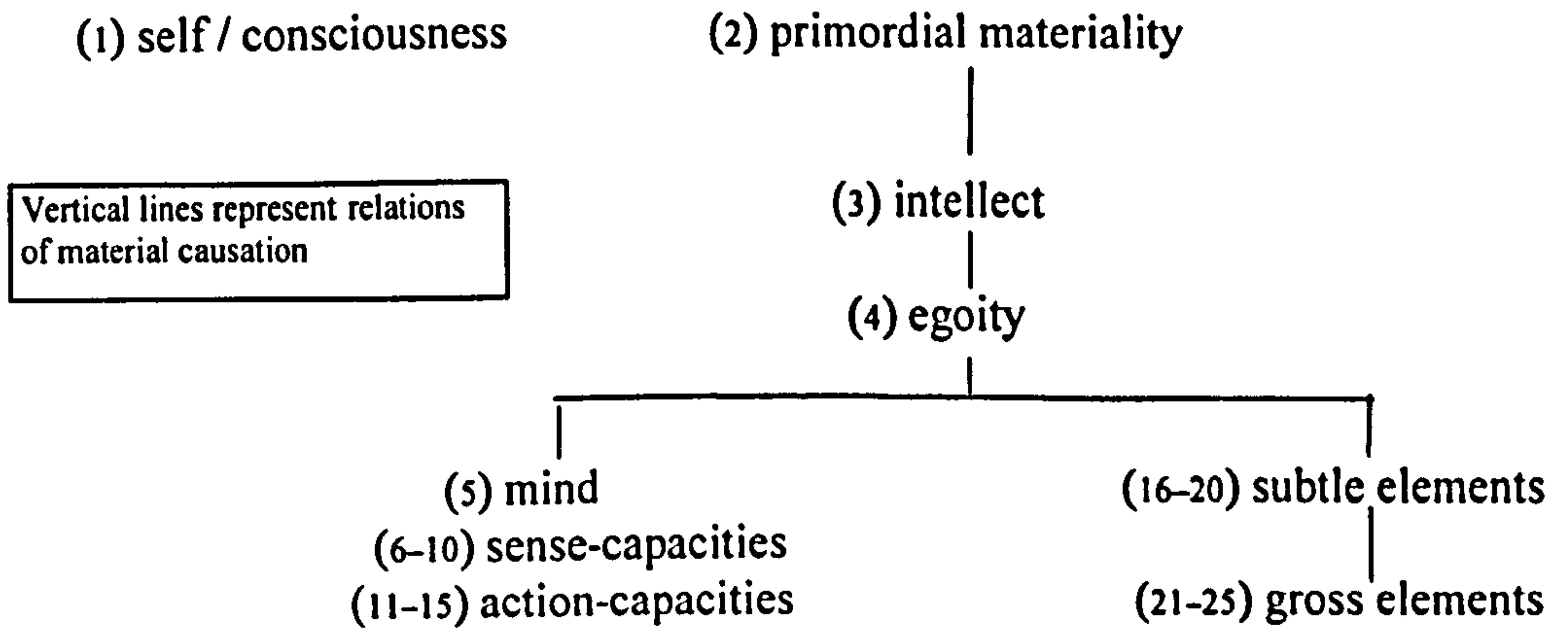
Appendix B

Diagrammatic Representation of the Metaphysical Schema of Classical Sāṃkhya

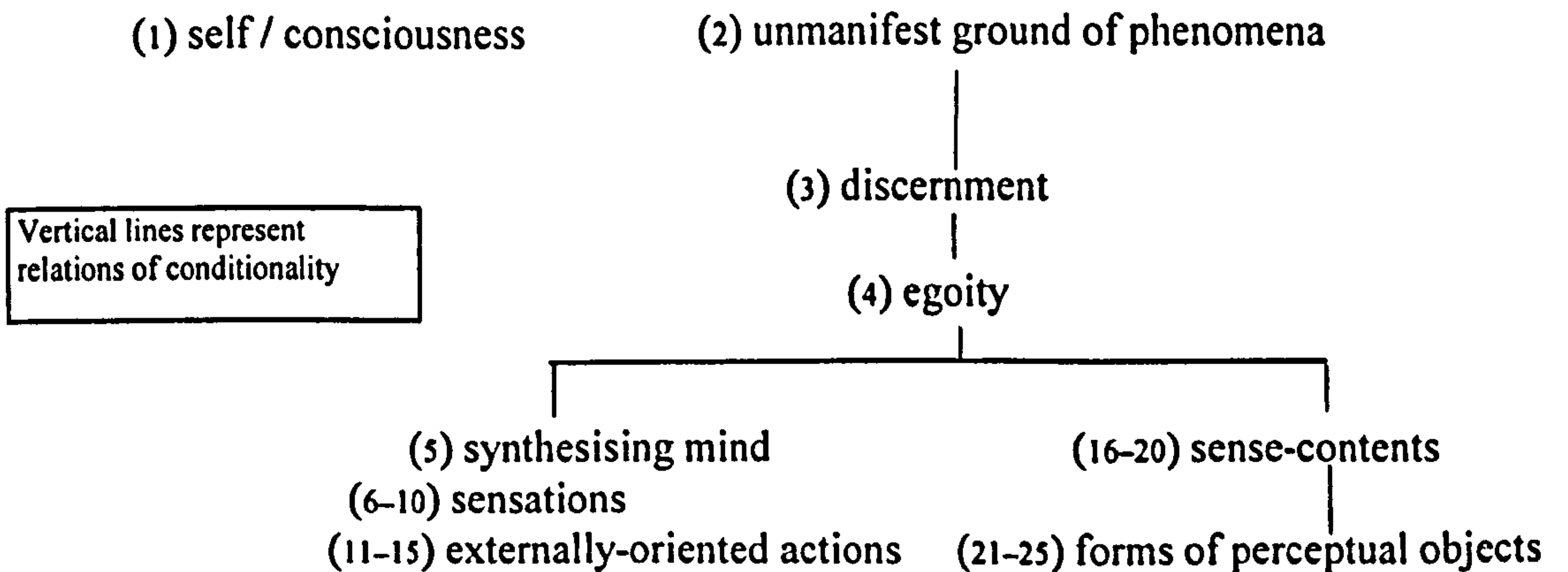
A. With Sanskrit Terms Only



B. According to the Standard Interpretation



C. According to the Interpretation Proposed in This Study



Glossary of Key Sanskrit Terms

(In English alphabetical order)

abhāva non-being, non-existent; unmanifest (cf. <i>asat</i>)	avidyā misperception; false knowledge (cf. <i>ajñāna</i> , <i>viparyaya</i>)
abhimāna the thought of (being a) self (cf. <i>ahaṁkāra</i>)	avikṛti uncreated, unmanifested
abhyāsa sustained practice, applying oneself to a task	aviśeṣa non-specific, unparticularised
adhyavasāya discernment, ascertainment (syn. <i>buddhi</i>)	avyakta unmanifest (syn. <i>aliṅga</i>)
advaita nondual, nondualism	bāhya(-karaṇa) outer instrument, comprising the ten indriyas
ahaṁkāra “I-maker”, egoity (cf. <i>abhimāna</i>)	bhakti devotion
aiśvarya (possessing the qualities) of īśvara; masterfulness	bhāṣya commentary, exegesis
ajñāna non-knowledge, ignorance (cf. <i>avidyā</i> , <i>viparyaya</i>)	bhāva being, existent; disposition, psychological characteristic
ākāśa space	bheda piercing, splitting, separation
aliṅga unmarked, unmanifest (syn. <i>avyakta</i>)	bhoga experience, enjoyment
anādi beginningless	bhoktṛ enjoyer, empirical subject
ānanda intense pleasure, bliss	bhūta being, element; form
ananta unending, infinite, eternal (syn. <i>nitya</i>)	bīja seed (of mental processes and patterns of behaviour; syn. <i>samskāra</i>); monosyllabic mantra
anātman not-self; inessential	brahman ultimate ground, absolute principle
anitya non-eternal, temporal	brāhmaṇa ritual ceremony; instructional text for the performance of rituals (second part of śruti); person who performs them
antaḥkaraṇa inner instrument, comprising buddhi, ahaṁkāra and manas	buddhi discernment, intellection (syn. <i>adhyavasāya</i> , <i>mahat</i>)
anugraha “pulling up”; grace; providence	buddhīndriya sense-capacity; sensation
anuśāsana exposition	cakra wheel; energy centre where two or more nāḍīs conjoin or intersect
ānvīkṣikī philosophical enquiry	cetas, cetana consciousness
ap water; liquidity	cit, citi consciousness, awareness
aparigraha “not grasping around”, non-covetousness	citiśakti consciousness-power
apavarga liberation, fulfilment (syn. <i>kaivalya</i> , <i>mokṣa</i>)	citta mind; thinking
āranyaka “of the forest”; teachings composed by/for forest-dwelling ascetics (third part of śruti)	cittamātra mind-only, consciousness-only (“idealist” view associated with Yogācāra Buddhism) (syn. <i>viññānavāda</i>)
artha object; purpose, sake	darśana vision, viewpoint, seeing; philosophical system (cf. <i>śāstra</i> , <i>tantra</i>)
asamprajñāta supra-cognitive	dhāraṇā holding, fixing; concentration
asat formally non-existent; unmanifest (cf. <i>abhāva</i>)	dharma order; righteousness, virtue
aṣṭāṅga eight-limbed, eightfold	dhyāna meditation, intense contemplation
āstika orthodox	
ātman self, essence, essential nature	

<i>diś</i> space; place	<i>mahat</i> the great (syn. <i>buddhi</i>)
<i>draṣṭṛ</i> seer	<i>manas</i> synthesising aspect of mind
<i>draṣṭṛtva</i> “seer-ness”, consciousness, awareness	<i>mantra</i> sacred sound or thought; recited (audibly or inaudibly) as an object of meditation
<i>dr̥śi</i> seeing	<i>māyā</i> creative power; illusion
<i>dr̥śimātra</i> seeing alone, mere seeing; awareness	<i>mokṣa, mukti, vimokṣa</i> release, liberation (syn. <i>apavarga, kaivalya</i>)
<i>dr̥śya</i> the seen, seeable	<i>mūla</i> root, foundation, base
<i>duḥkha</i> distress, dissatisfactoriness	
<i>guṇa</i> strand, quality, constituent; condition of manifestation	<i>nāḍī</i> channel, flow; conduit of prāṇa
<i>guru</i> heavy; spiritual preceptor	<i>nirbīja</i> without seed, i.e. without saṃskāras
<i>haṭha</i> forceful, strong, vigorous	<i>nirguṇa</i> without qualities, unmanifest
<i>hiranyagarbha</i> golden germ/seed	<i>nirodha</i> cessation
<i>indriya</i> capacity, power; general term for the five buddhīndriyas and five karmendriyas	<i>nitya</i> eternal (ambiguously: everlasting or atemporal) (syn. <i>ananta</i>)
<i>īśa, īśvara</i> lord, master, deity (cf. <i>aiśvarya</i>)	<i>niyama</i> restraint
<i>jñā</i> knower (syn. <i>puruṣa</i>)	<i>pāda</i> chapter, part (lit. foot, leg)
<i>jñāna</i> knowledge, cognition	<i>pariṇāma</i> “bending around”; transformation, modification
<i>kaivalya</i> aloneness, solitariness, absolute-ness (cf. <i>kevala</i>)	<i>pradhāna</i> that which is primal or fundamental (syn. <i>prakṛti</i>)
<i>kāla</i> time	<i>prajñā</i> insight, knowledge
<i>karaṇa</i> instrument, capacity; the antaḥ- and bāhya-karaṇa combined	<i>prakāśa</i> shining forth, illumination
<i>kārikā</i> distich, stanza	<i>prakṛti</i> that which creates or manifests (syn. <i>pradhāna</i>)
<i>karman</i> action, work, deed	<i>prakṛtilaya</i> dissolution of (or into) prakṛti
<i>karmendriya</i> action-capacity; activity	<i>prāṇa</i> breath; vital energy
<i>karuṇā</i> compassion	<i>prāṇāyāma</i> extended retention of prāṇa; breath-holding (syn. <i>kumbhaka</i>)
<i>kārya</i> effect; manifestation	<i>pratiprasava</i> return to the source or original state
<i>kevala</i> alone, absolute, singular (cf. <i>kaivalya</i>)	<i>pratyaya</i> mental content, phenomenon
<i>kleśa</i> affliction; mental defect	<i>pravacana</i> pronouncement, verbal presentation
<i>kriyā</i> activity	<i>pravṛtti</i> engagement, activity
<i>kumbhaka</i> retention (of breath, prāṇa) (syn. <i>prāṇāyāma</i>)	<i>pṛthivī</i> earth; solidity
<i>kuṇḍalī, kuṇḍalinī(-śakti)</i> “that-which-is-coiled”; serpent power	<i>puruṣa</i> self; person
<i>laghu</i> light (not heavy)	<i>rajas</i> activity, energy
<i>liṅga</i> cipher, sign; composite of the manifest principles from buddhi to the tanmātras (i.e. excluding only the five bhūtas)	<i>rūpa</i> form; nature; appearance
<i>liṅgamātra</i> mere mark (syn.? <i>mahat</i>)	<i>śabda</i> word, language, speech, sound
	<i>sākṣin</i> witness, witnessing
	<i>śakti</i> power, energy; feminine pole of the supreme principle, esp. as conceived in Tantrism
	<i>samādhi, samāpatti</i> mental absorption

saṃhitā collection (of teachings or mantras); first part of śruti
saṃkalpa resolve, determination, idea
saṃkhyā number
sāṃkhya counting, enumeration; philosophical system
saṃnyāsa renunciation
saṃprajñāta cognitive, with cognition
saṃskāra unconscious or preconscious mental content (such as a memory); cause of habit-patterns (cf. *bīja*, *vāsanā*)
saṃyoga confusion; conjunction; communion (esp. of puruṣa and prakṛti)
sarga surgence, effusion; manifestation
śarīra body
ṣaṣṭitantra “sixty doctrines”; name of an ancient Sāṃkhya text (or of several such texts)
śāstra doctrine; system of philosophy (syn. *tantra*; cf. *darśana*)
sat formally existent, manifest
satkārya “a formally-existent [entity] is an effect”
sattva being-ness, existence; capacity to manifest (in the *YS*, syn. *buddhi*)
sāttvika possessing the quality of sattva
śīla nature, character
sphoṭa spurt, burst, erupt
sphoṭavāda theory that the meaning of a word “bursts forth” in the mind (rather than being conveyed *via* its linguistic correlate)
śruti “that which is heard”, revealed doctrine; traditionally divided into four categories: saṃhitā, brāhmaṇa, āraṇyaka, and upaniṣad
sthiti steadiness, stability
sthūla gross, coarse; perceptible
sūkṣma subtle; imperceptible
śūnya devoid of manifest content, empty
sūtra thread; aphoristic statement
sva one’s own, oneself
svāmin self-possessor, owner

tamas darkness; limitation
tāmasa possessing the quality of tamas
tanmātra “that-alone”; sense-content or -datum
tantra doctrine (syn. *śāstra*); text (lit. warp, loom)
tattva “that-ness”, essence; principle

tejas fire; heat, light
traiguṇya three-stranded (cf. *guṇa*)
triguṇa three strands (cf. *guṇa*)

upaniṣad “sitting near to”; esoteric scripture; fourth part of śruti

vāc voice, speech, speaking
vairāgya, *virāga* non-attachment, dispassion (lit. “without colour”)
vāsanā memory trace (cf. *saṃskāra*)
vastu object; entity (cf. *artha*, *viśaya*)
vaidika Vedic, i.e. belonging to, or in conformity with, the Vedas
vāyu air, wind; gaseousness
veda knowledge, vision; sometimes used synonymously with *śruti*, while at other times denoting merely the saṃhitā portion
vedānta “end of the Veda”; collective term for the Upaniṣads; philosophical systematisation of Upaniṣadic teachings
vijñāna special knowledge, discernment; consciousness
vijñānavāda consciousness(-only) view; “idealism” (esp. associated with Yogācāra Buddhism) (syn. *cittamātra*)
vikalpa intuition without an objective basis; imaginative conception
vikṛti created, manifested
vimokṣa (see *mokṣa*)
viparyaya opposite, inversion; misapprehension (cf. *ajñāna*, *avidyā*)
viśaya object, phenomenon, manifest entity (cf. *artha*, *vastu*); domain
viśeṣa special, specific, differentiated
viveka discrimination, discernment
vivekakhyāti discriminating vision
vivekin discerning one
vṛtti whirl, turning; activity; mental activity; subcommentary
vyakta manifest

yantra device; symbolic diagram
yoga union; soteriological discipline
yogin practitioner of yoga; one who has attained some degree of soteriological insight

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